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TOURISM

AUGUST 1995
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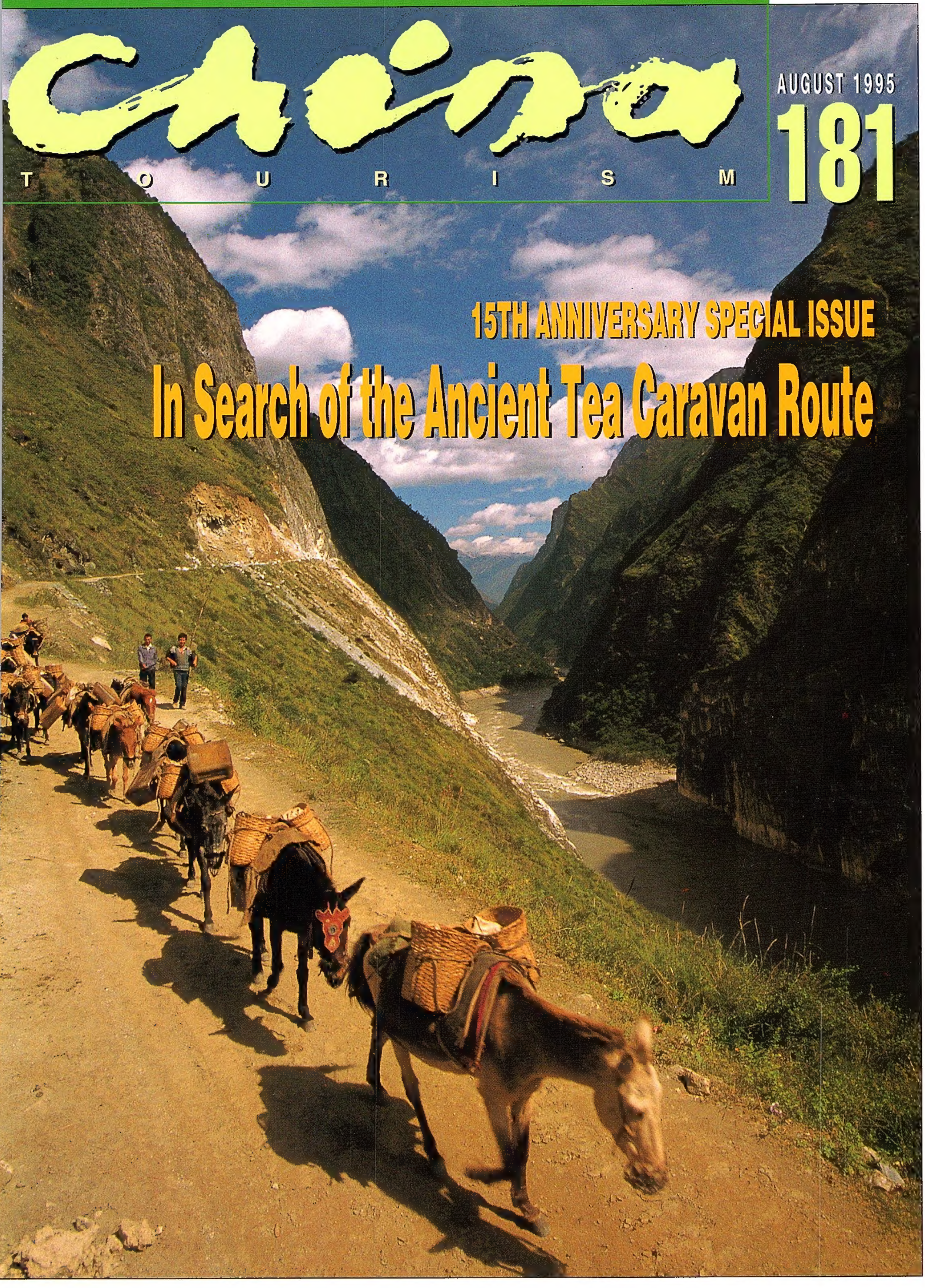

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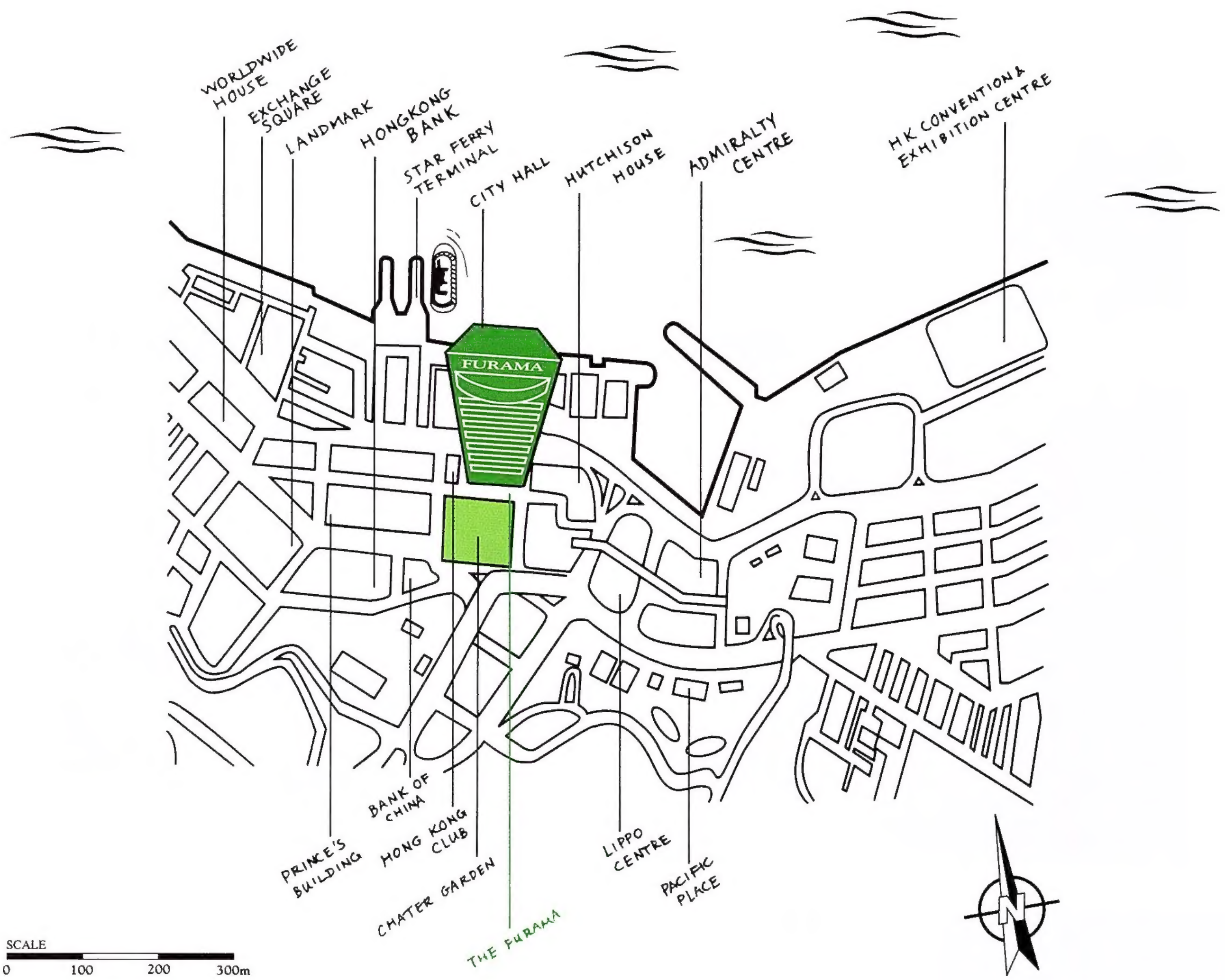
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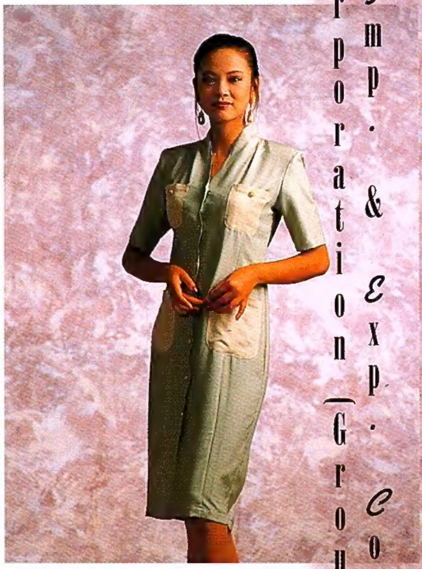

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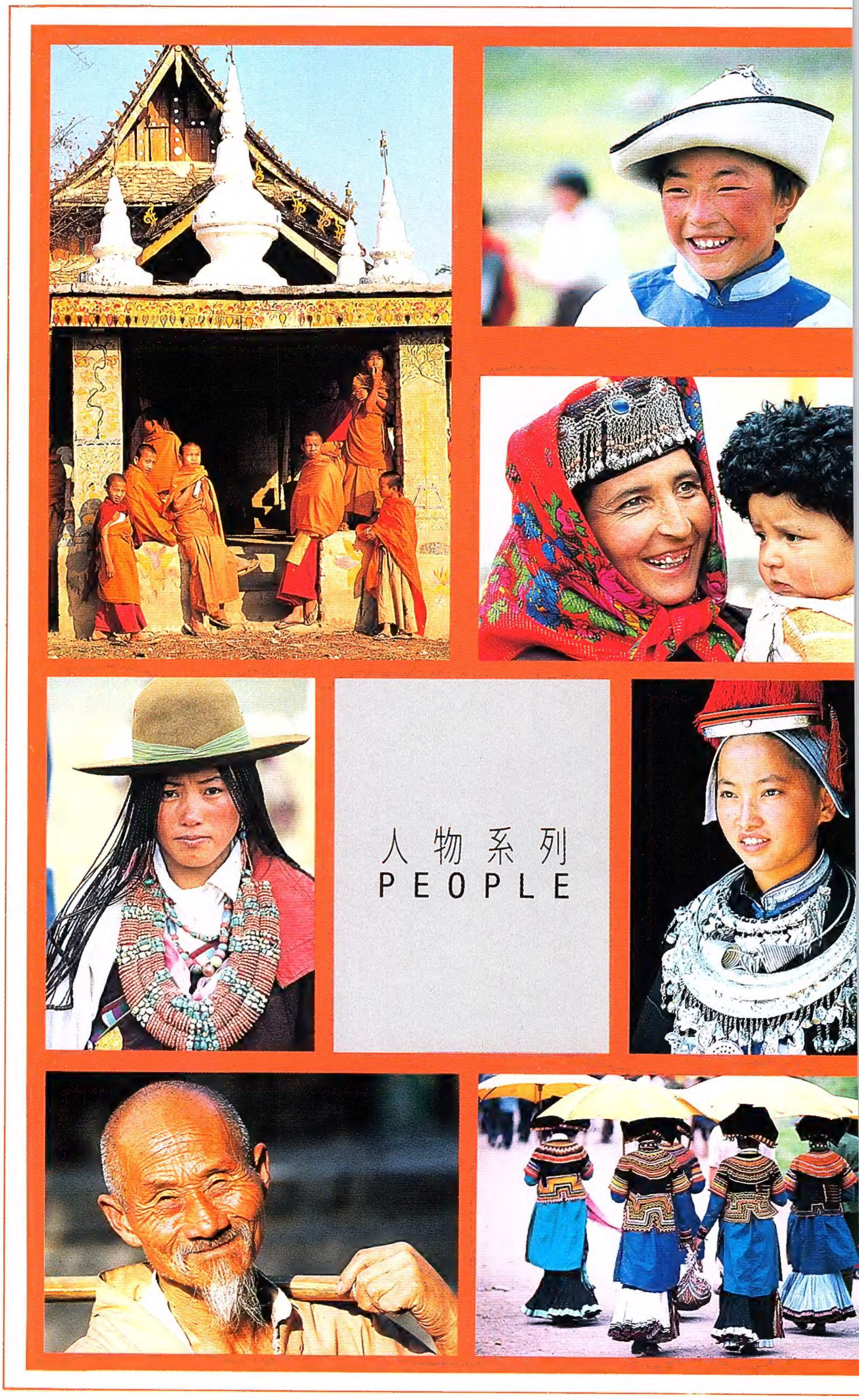

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Jiangsu Native Produce Import & Export (Group) Corporation

Business Scope

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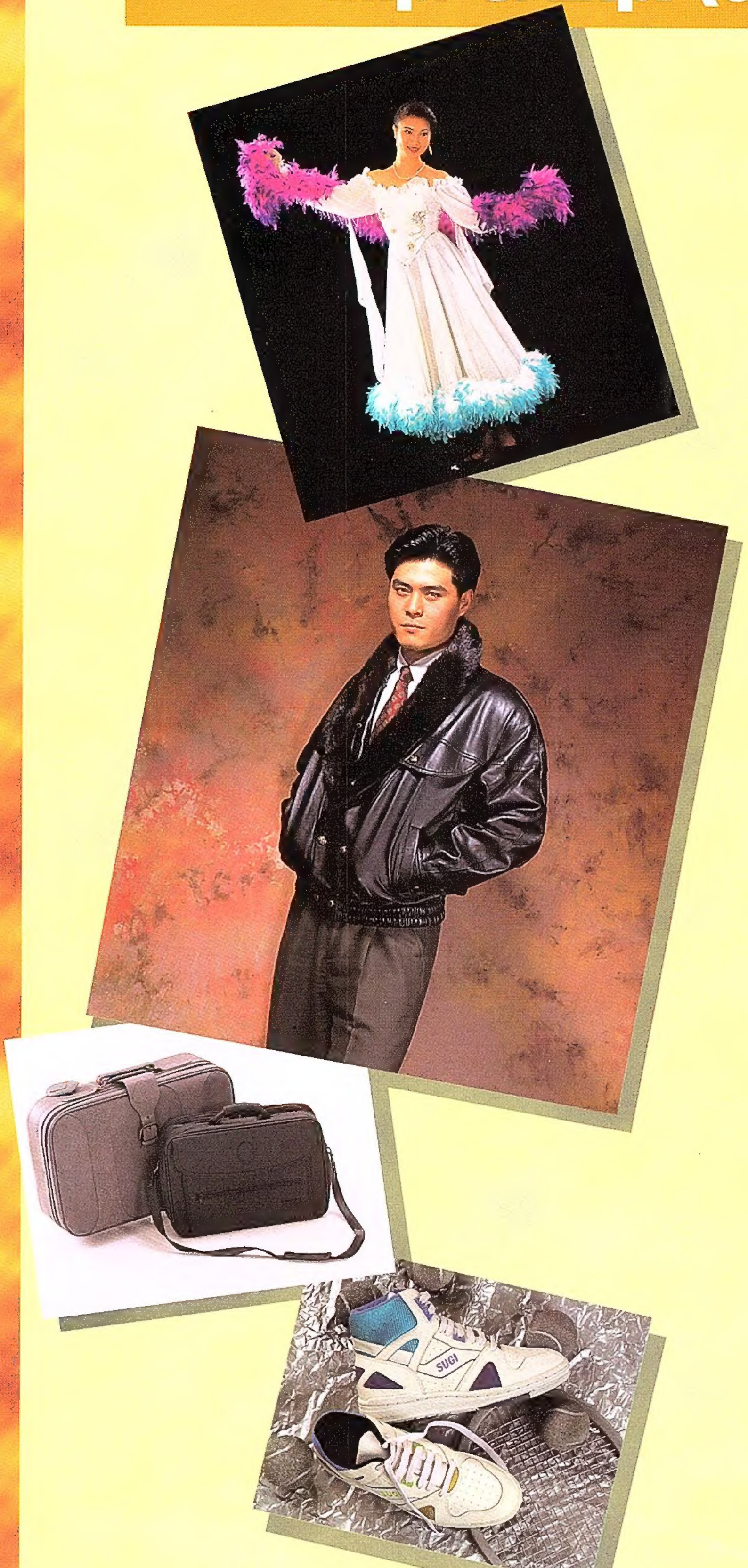
Guangdong Animal By-Products Imp. & Exp. (Group) Corp



With a trade history of 44 years, the corp. has formed an international marketing network of animal by-products, and other light industrial products import and exports to over 600 customers across the world, such as to companies in America, Germany and Hong Kong. We have 20 factories supplying top quality products for the corp. in China, with advanced equipment for shoe-making, garments and down washing, and our carpets, down products, and leather garments have enabled us to win international prestige.

Last year alone, our export trade value reached over US$ 290 million. The aim and philosophy of our corp is trans-national development, a wide and modern business scope, and sound economic management.

Import and exports:

Leather, feather, fur, footwear, garments, carpets, luggage & bags, brushes, rabbit hair & glue, down, light industrial products, cereal oils & foodstuffs, artex, textiles, ceramics, arts & crafts, metals & minerals, chemicals, medicines & health products, machinery & equipment, stationery, sports goods, etc.

Business Scope:

Barter trade, entrepot trade, border trade, consignment, storage, transport, advertising, information, real estate, joint ventures, cooperation, processing with imported materials supplied by the buyers, assembling supplied components, compensation trade, etc.

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Tel: 8886018 Fax: 8862442 Telex: 44373 KABB CN Cable: "Byproducts" Guangzhou China Post Code: 510130

It has been 34 years since the founding of the Beijing Textiles Import and Export Corporation. To date, the corporation has opened up stable marketing channels with more than eighty countries and regions, accumulating a total export value of around 2.5 billion dollars. In 1993, the corporation joined the ranks of the 300 largest firms engaged in foreign trade and occupied the 216th place of the top 500 enterprises in China.

The corporation has over the years developed business relations with its trade partners abroad on the principle of giving service and product quality and reputation the highest priority in business. It has painstakingly developed a number of famous brand products which have won outstanding prestige in international markets. They include: the "Copper Pavilion" brand combed yarn that ranks first of its kind in the country by virtue of its excellent quality; the "Flying Angel" brand high-grade velveteen directly woven on fine ne 60s yarn; the superior "Iceberg" brand trueran white poplin; the "Swan" brand woolen piece goods of international popularity and the "Flying Swallow" brand super cashmere overcoating.

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At present, with the deepening of the structural reforms in China's foreign trade, a socialist market system striving for broader economic development, more extensive trade relations and wider markets demands us to go steadily toward the target of becoming an internationalized, genuinely businesslike group enterprise amid the highly competitive world. To attain this goal, the Beijing Textiles Import and Export Corporation has set up affiliated agencies in Eastern Europe, Germany, Australia, Hong Kong and Macau, enabling us to explore and expand overseas markers. At the same time, we have cooperated with investors from Singapore to run a commercial center as a joint venture that combines international trade, recreation and services in an integral whole with multiple funtions in commercial activities, we have also made investment in factories selected on merit of dependable output quality as production base of our export products.

To date, apart from textile surface materials, the corporation is steadily enlarging its variety and scope of business. It now deals with garments, cotton knitwear, woolen wear, bedding articles, tablecloths, metal fittings, etc. We also process materials supplied or imported by clients, import textile machinery and equipment and do agency business.

The corporation sincerely welcomes friends from all countries and regions to develop trade relations with it.

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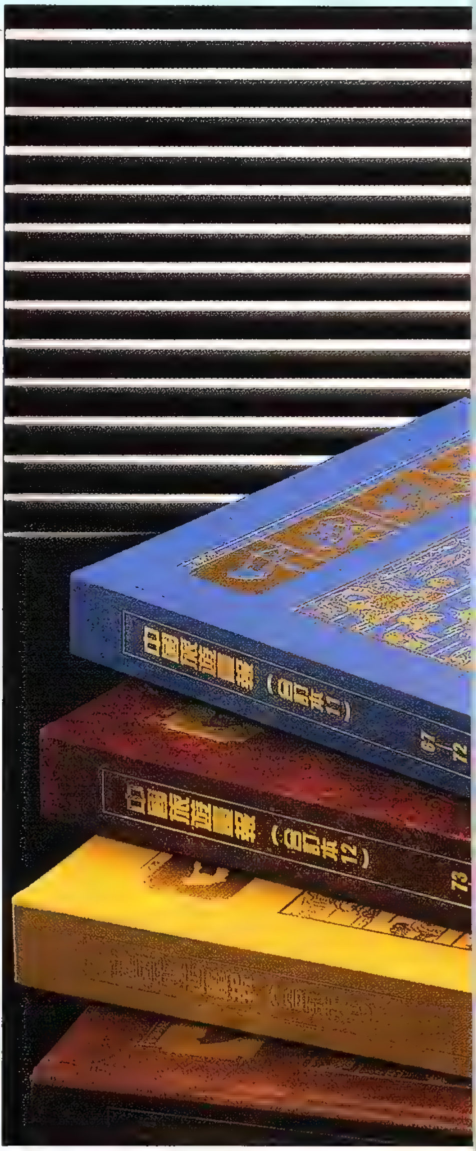

The 14-years-old <China Tourism> Pictorial has long been known for its top quality photos and in-depth reports on the culture, people, places as well as tourism products and facilities of China.

It has become an indispensable reference guide to leaders in the tourism trade who rely on it for better insight into trade resources and opportunities, as well as for up-grading practitioner's knowledge and service.

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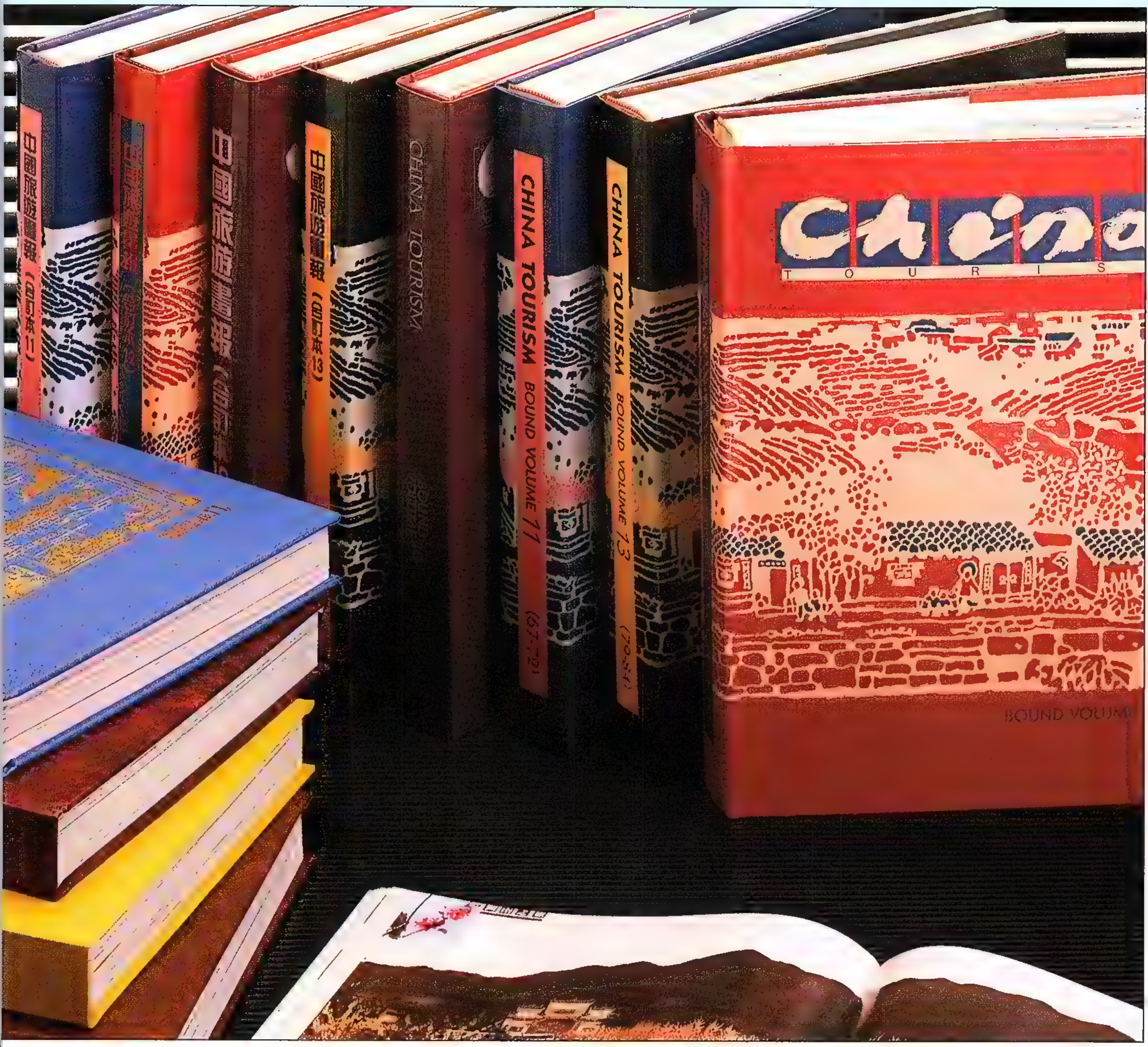

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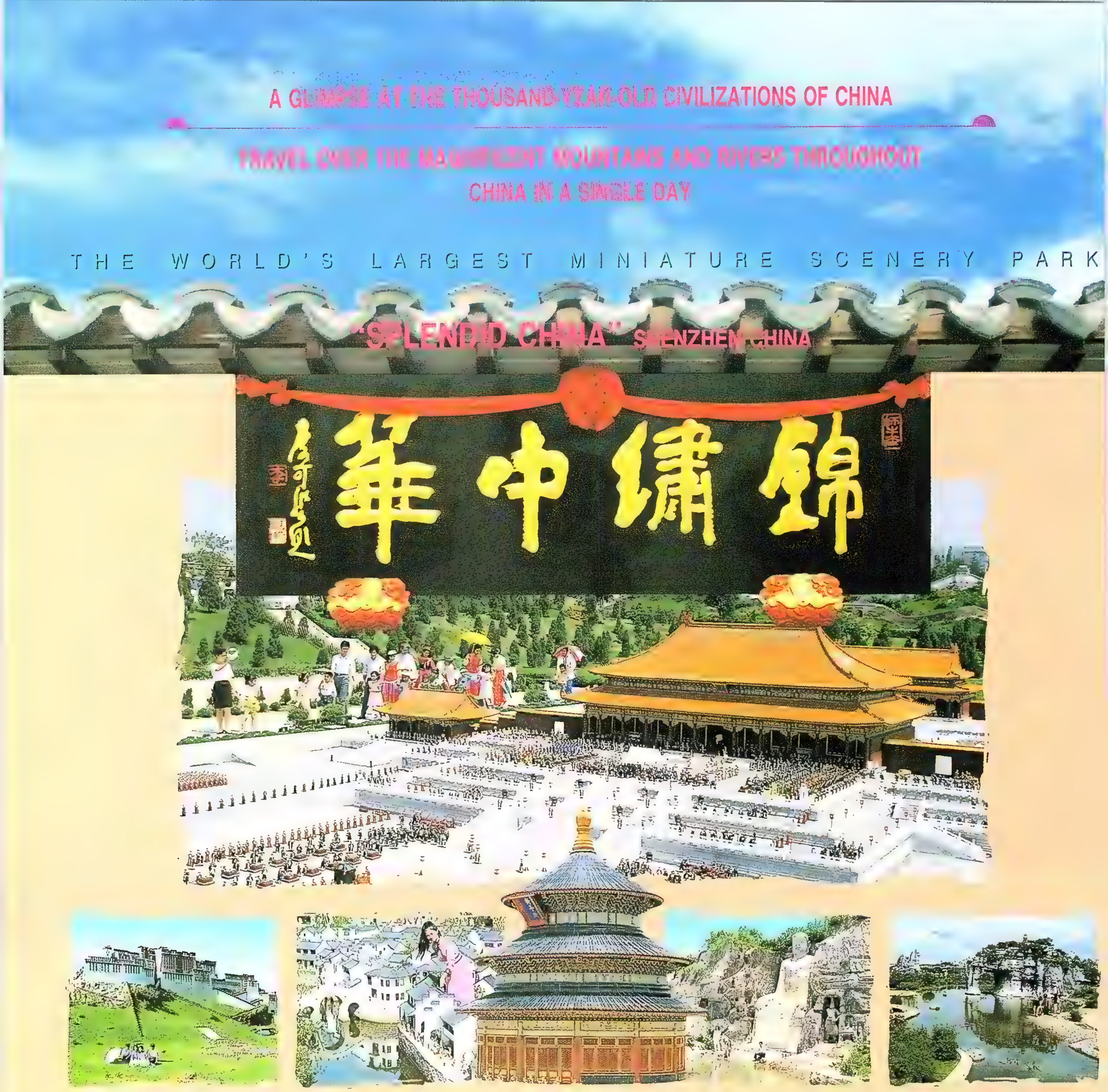
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EDITORIAL

Horseback Days: A Celebration of Tea and the Ancient Tea Caravan Route

More than 1,300 years ago, Princess Wen Cheng of the Tang Dynasty married the Tibetan king, Songtsan Gambo (617-650). As part of her royal dowry, Princess Wen Cheng brought with her tea, a produce from China's Central Plain. From then on, Tibetans were gradually introduced to tea drinking, which they included into their national daily diet.

In order to satisfy the benefits of drinking tea, which apart from containing caffeine is also a source of vitamins and mineral salts, the Tibetans left their plateau homeland to travel to the famous tea producing provinces of Sichuan and Yunnan. The Tibetans exchanged horses which played an important role in business and transportation, traditional Tibetan medicine, leather and fur for Yunnan and Sichuan's tea leaves. A "horse and tea barter market" was thus formed with numerous caravan trails establishing the "Tea Caravan Route".

Because there are many variations and road networks forming the ancient route, we mainly concentrate on the Sichuan-Tibet and Yunnan-Tibet routes, traversing high, snowy mountaintops and ridges and also through a panoply of fascinating folk cultures and picturesque scenery.

In the old days, the ancient tea roads streamed with the unique sight of caravans heralded by flags and the beating of gongs from afar, with horse drivers and caravan leaders of different nationalities bonded by a common trade. Despite today's changes where highways have replaced most of the tea caravan roads, in some rural forest areas small caravans continue to use the original old roads which have survived almost unchanged.

For our 15th anniversary special, we guide our readers along the ancient Tea Caravan Route passing mountains, snow, and tropical rainforests to learn of the tremendous historical changes of the imperial tea trade monopoly, and recapture the unique experience of the Tea Caravan Route. Tasting sip by sip, whether Pu'er tea or buttered, sour, red, black or green tea, we take the "oo" out of Typhoo by opening your eyes to a rich and fascinating tea country both past and present.

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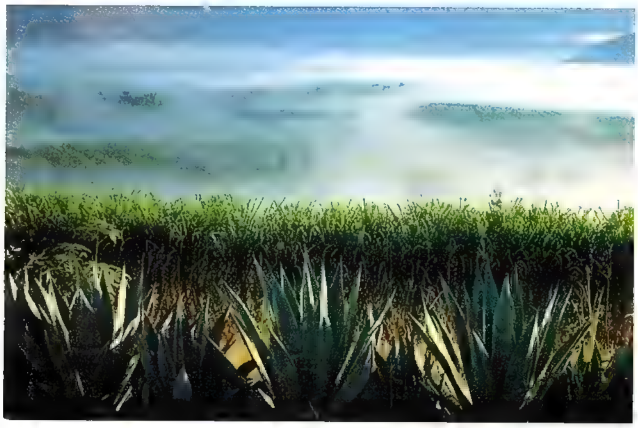

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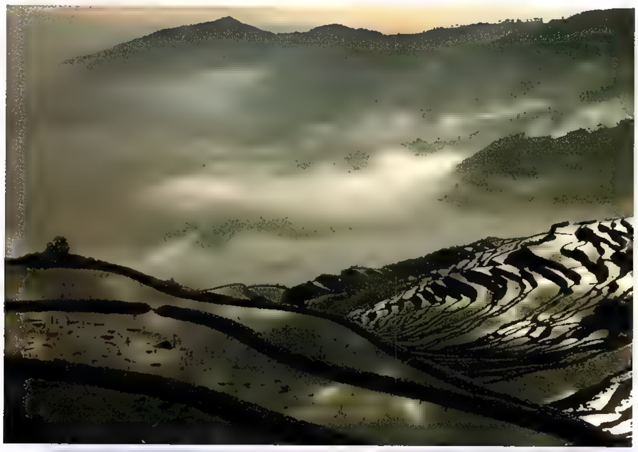

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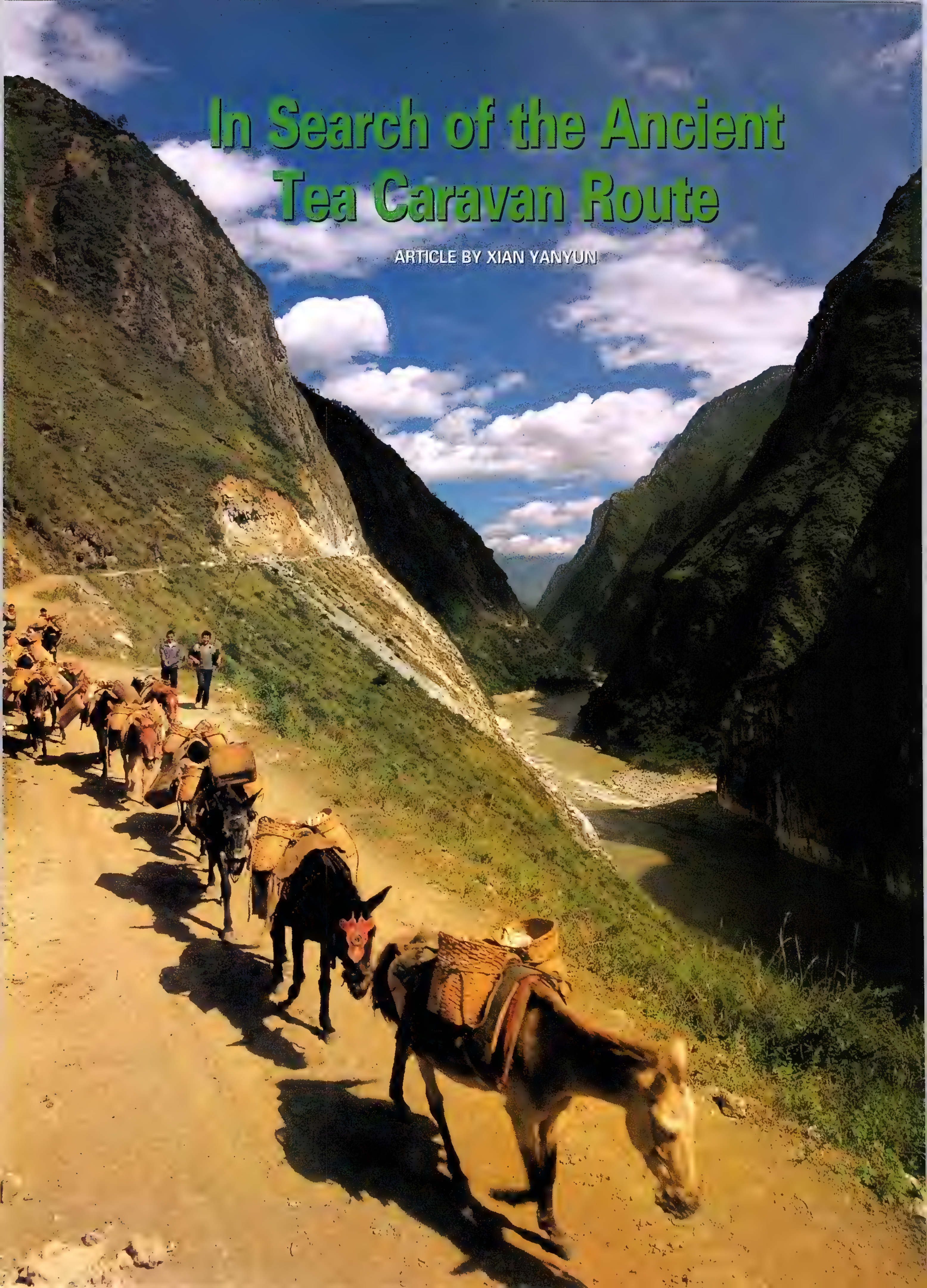
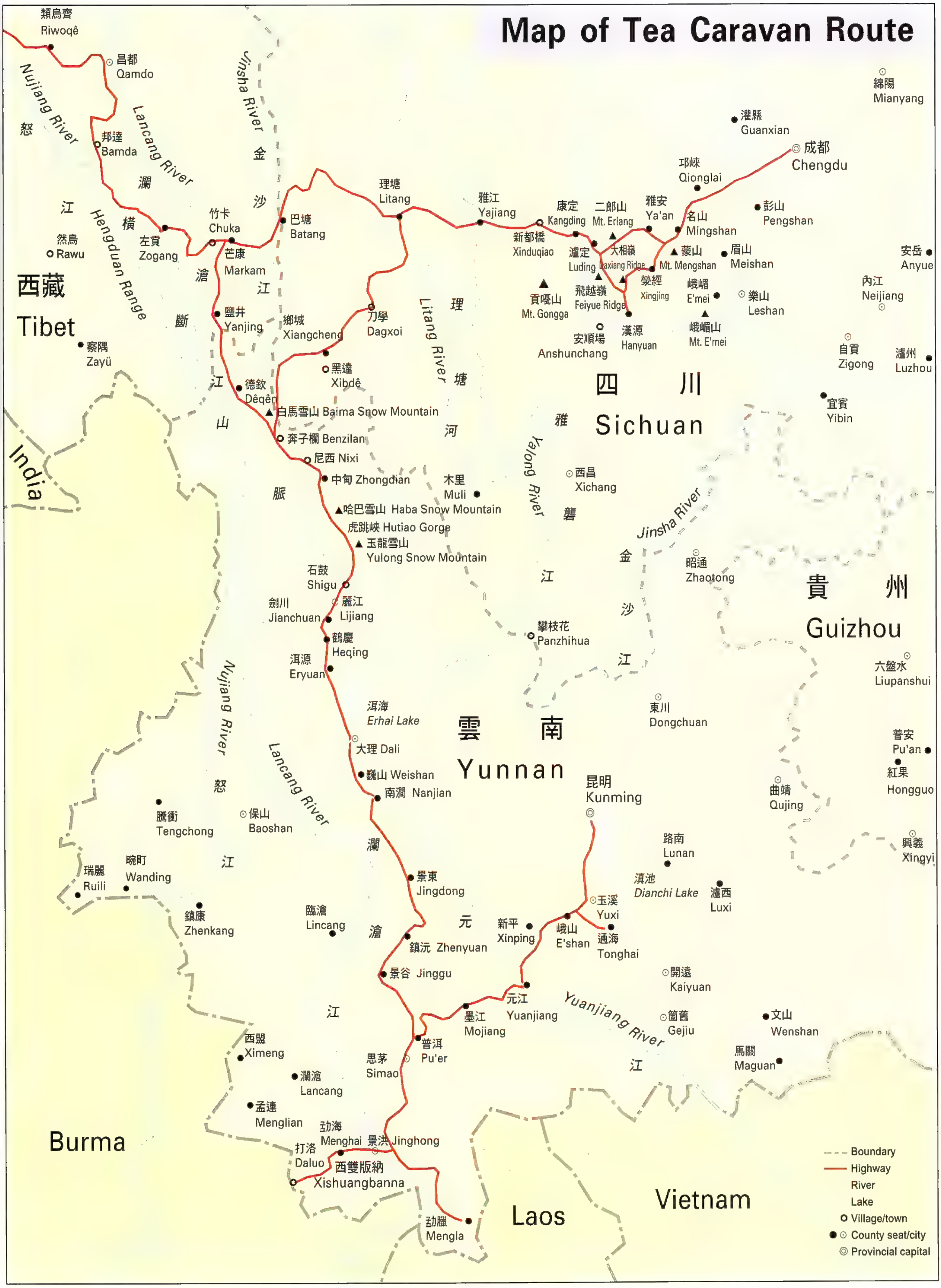
In Search of the Ancient Tea Caravan Route

ARTICLE BY XIAN YANYUN



Map of Tea Caravan Route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昌都
Qamdo
Nujiang River
怒
邦達
Bamda
Lancang River
瀾
江
Jinsha River
金
沙
橫
竹卡
Chuka
左貢
Zogang
然烏
Rawu
Hengduan Range
滄
芒康
Markam
巴塘
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西藏
Tibet
斷
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Yanjing
鄉城
Xiangcheng
察隅
Zayü
江
山
德欽
Dêqên
理塘
Litang
刀學
Dagxoi
黑達
Xibdê
白馬雪山 Baima Snow Mountain
奔子欄 Benzilan
尼西 Nixi
India
中甸 Zhongdian
脈
Litang River
理
塘
河
雅江
Yajiang
康定
Kangding
二郎山
Mt. Erlang
雅安
Ya'an
新都橋
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滎經
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Yalong River
礱
江
西昌
Xichang
木里
Muli
哈巴雪山 Haba Snow Mountain
虎跳峽 Hutiao Gorge
玉龍雪山
Yulong Snow Mountain
Jinsha River
金
沙
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昭通
Zhaotong
貴
州
Guizhou
石鼓
Shigu
劍川
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麗江
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洱源
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攀枝花
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六盤水
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大理 Dali
雲
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曲靖
Qujing
普安
Pu'an
紅果
Hongguo
興義
Xingyi
開遠
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Lancang
孟連
Menglian
勐海
Menghai
景洪 Jinghong
打洛
Daluo
西雙版納
Xishuangbanna
勐臘
Mengla
Burma
Laos
Vietnam
Boundary
Highway
River
Lake
Village/town
County seat/city
Provincial capital

Border Tea and the Tea Caravan Route

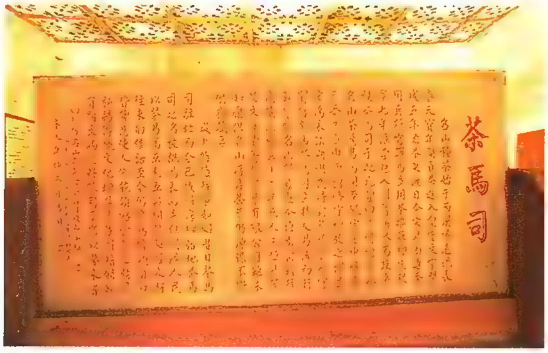
1

In between the southeastern part of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau and the region adjacent to the Sichuan Basin and Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau, there are numerous towering mountains and great rivers. In the valleys of these mountains spread caravan paths interlinking each other like cobwebs connecting the border areas with inland China.

The Forming of the Route

2

3



4

Known as "the roof of the world", the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau lies at an average altitude of 3,000-4,000 metres above sea level, where the weather for most of the year is dominated by cold and drought. The climatic conditions are suitable for livestock breeding rather than growing fruit and vegetables. As a result, a large proportion of the staple diet of local Tibetans is milk and meat. Due to a lack of vitamins, the population of the nomadic Tibetans has been historically sparse and thin.

One thousand and three hundred years ago when Princess Wen Cheng of the Tang Dynasty (618-907) was married to the Tibetan king Songtsan Gambo (617-650), tea was brought to Tibet as one of the princess' dowries. Since then the Tibetans gradually took to tea-drinking and were so addicted to tea-drinking that they would rather go without food than have no tea every day. Small wonder, when tea can relieve grease and help digestion and make up for the deficiency of vitamins in the Tibetan's meaty diet. Since tea entered Tibetan life, the local population flourished.

As a result, Tibetans came down from the plateau crossing the Hengduan Mountains to the tea producing areas in Sichuan and

Yunnan provinces, and exchanged horses, medicinal materials, furs and feather, and other plateau products for tea, which had become indispensable in their daily life.

A historical horse and tea market was thus formed. The network of the numerous caravan trails which connected the pastoral areas to the tea producing areas was customarily called the "Caravan Route".

Tea Trade in Border Areas

Since the Tang Dynasty, the Central Plains were constantly intruded by nomadic tribes from the northwest; even the Great Wall failed to hold them back. Highly developed in agriculture the Central plains, however, were lacking in battle steeds. In view of the need of tea in the border areas, the imperial courts established many tea plantations, in order to exchange war horses from the nomadic people on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau with tea leaves. The "Tea and Horse Law" was formulated and Tea and Horse offices were set up to implement the system of a tea monopoly so as to control the supply of tea leaves and as a means to dominate the people living in the western border and vassal states. This tea was called "tea for border sales" or simply "border tea". Border tea falls into two categories: the West Route Tea and the South Route Tea. The West Route Tea, with Sichuan Province as its distribution centre, was sold to Mongolia, Xinjiang and the Middle East. The transaction route was roughly the same as the Silk Road. The South Route Tea was sold to Tibet from Sichuan's Ya'an, one of the major tea producing areas, conveyed over mountains and ridges along several caravan trails.

5

6

The South Route Tea

The long caravan trails are like a large net deeply carved into the mountains and valleys on the plateau in southwestern China. Today on the essential trunks of the ancient tea caravan route, the Sichuan-Tibet and Yunnan-Tibet highways have been built. We made an inspection tour along both of them. We visited Xishuangbanna in Yunnan and Mount Mengding in Sichuan – the two main original sites of tea. On

1. Tuo tea manufactured by Xiaguan Tea Factory in Dali is welcomed by Tibetans (by Peng Zhen Ge).
2. The earliest way of making compressed tea (by Peng Zhen Ge)
3. Manufactured by Sichuan Xingjing Tea Factory, this square tea is the well-known "golden tip"(by Lai Wu).
4. This "tea government" tablet in Mingshan describes the tea franchise history from the Tang to Qing Dynasty (by Chen Jin).
5. Our study mission team reaches the top of Zhigela Snow Mountain in Tibet (by Alfred Ko).
6. Daluo: a small town in Yunnan located near the Burmese border (by Xu Jinyan)

our way we experienced immense changes of landscapes from tropical rainforests to frigid plateaus, and met with more than 20 nationalities each with their different language, customs and dress. And each of them had their own ways of brewing tea and tea-drinking customs.

The legendary figure Shennong, one of the first physicians in Chinese history, was believed to have used tea as an antidote. The site of his field work, according to some researchers, should be in Sichuan or at the juncture of Sichuan and Hubei.

1

In the Han Dynasty over 2,000 years ago, the ancient State of Shu had a tea plantation on Mount Mengding. Later, China's oldest tea transaction market was formed in Pengshan County nearby.

The area in the ancient State of Shu is not only the birthplace of tea but also the earliest starting point of the Tea Caravan Route. By the Sichuan-Tibet Highway in Mingshan County, we found the ruins of a tea caravan office first built in the Song Dynasty (960-1279) – an institution set up by the imperial court for the administration of tea and horse transaction.

2

In the tropical rainforest area in Xishuangbanna, Yunnan, there is an 800-year-old cultivated tea tree. Here we also found a 1,700-year-old primitive tea tree hailed as the "King of Tea Trees". These two tea trees have strongly testified that tea trees originated in the Xishuangbanna area of Yunnan.

In terms of tea-drinking, the Han people are particular about the delicate fragrance of tea and its effect on preventing diseases. So for tea brewing they choose the small leaf variety, in particular the tender leaves which appear in early spring, while the big leafed tea which is similar to the tea tree prototype, is picked in the summer and autumn when the leaves are fully grown. Both are sold to the border areas. The liquor of the latter is dark in colour and strong in taste, and is also rich in vitamins and caffeine. Pu'er tea, the pick of the varieties sold to the border areas, is produced in the Xishuangbanna area.

Tea-drinking is different for each of China's nationalities. The Dais in Yunnan customarily roast fresh tea leaves over the fire and then add boiling water, to give roast tea. This is probably the most ancient way of making tea. The Blang people, who are neighbours of the Dais, bury tea leaves underground for several years until it becomes sour and it is eaten as a vegetable. The bamboo tea – the earliest compressed tea – is also one of the most traditional teas packed for the border areas.

In Dali one can try Three Course tea of the Bai minority which consists of three courses: bitter, spicy and sweet; and in the Tibetan regions, sitting around the fire pit with the local Tibetans, one can savour from a big bowl, buttered tea.

The Tea Caravan Route derived its name from the transaction of tea and horses, where transport depended on caravans. According to historical documents, in the reign of Emperor Qianlong (1736-1795) during the Qing Dynasty, caravans composed of about 50,000 horses carried tea leaves from Pu'er to Tibet every year.

3

4

At the processing workshops, tea leaves are compressed into various types of cakes making tea transport more convenient for caravans to load and unload.

Today, transportation on highways and railways have been developed in China's southwestern areas. However, on the tea caravan routes in some areas small groups of caravans for short-distance conveyance can still be seen. In Dali and Lijiang large-scale horse markets are still held every year with brisk business on pack horses.

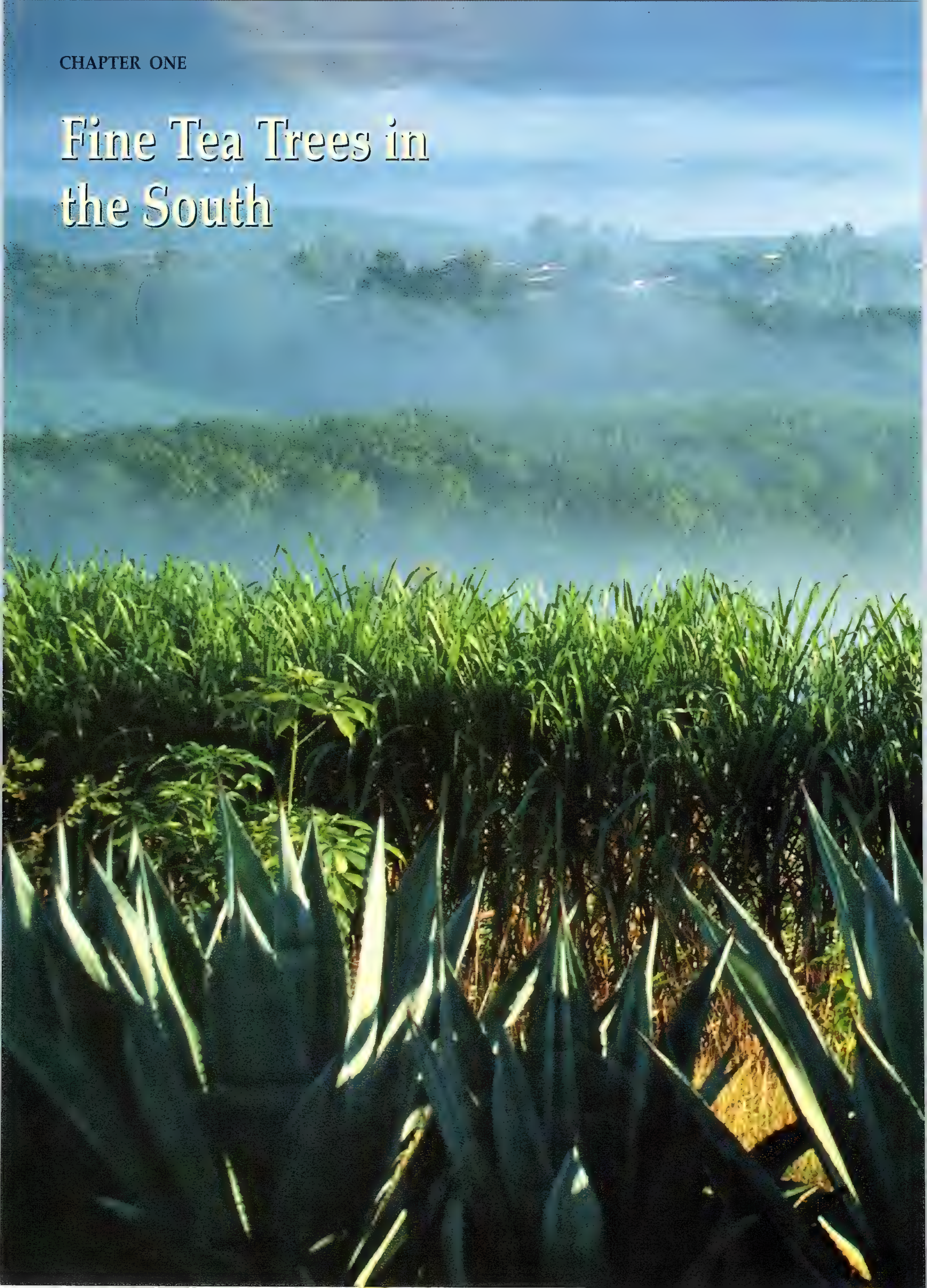
According to the memory of some veteran horse drivers, a caravan in the past mostly consisted of over 100 horses, while a big caravan had as many as 300-400. On the journey there were often three or four caravans travelling together, forming quite a sight with nearly 1,000 horses packed with goods trekking on rugged mountain paths, passing through the streets of prefectural capitals.

Each caravan had a leader or boss plus several horse drivers. With guns across their shoulders, and sometimes bringing their wives along, they went north and south enduring the hardships of an arduous journey....

1. The Three Course Tea of the Bai nationality: bitter, sweet and with aftertaste (by Peng Zhen Ge)
2. A Tibetan woman in Dêqên preparing buttered tea (by Peng Zhen Ge)
3. A women's caravan from Tongbi Pass near Yingjiang River. Horses transport their daily necessities on a rough and tough road (by Chen Anding).
4. Mengdingshan Tea Plantation in Mingshan County, Sichuan Province (by Peng Zhen Ge)

CHAPTER ONE

Fine Tea Trees in the South



The fertile soil on both sides of the Lancang River, one of the earliest origins of tea trees in the world on the Tropic of Cancer is covered with green growth in all seasons of the year (by Shi Zhiyi).

茶馬古道

We arrived at Xishuangbanna in Yunnan Province a few days before New Year, but the area was still tropical scenery of glorious sunlight, thriving trees and verdant forests. To us who had come to retrac the ancient Tea Caravan Route, Xishuangbanna is more than a tourist attraction: it is the origin of tea trees

A Place of Origin of Tea Trees

We travelled on to Menghai, where we began our journey retracing the Tea Caravan Route and the histor of tea in China. The climate in Menghai is hot and humid. The mountain valleys in the area are permeated i all seasons of the year with a dense, white fog, which provides the best nourishment for tea leaves. Ever connoisseur of tea knows that tea from Menghai is rich in flavour and many top-quality varieties are produced there.

We found the Tea Research Institute of the Yunnan Academy of Agricultural Sciences outside the count town of Menghai. The fact that a provincial-level research institute is located here shows the importance o the place in tea production. After many years of research, Chinese and foreign specialists have reached th consensus that China's Yunnan Province is a prime site for the origin of tea trees. Among the 23 genera an 380 species of tea-producing plants in the world, 15 genera and 260 species can be found i Yunnan. In the virgin forest of Bada in Menghai, there is a 32.12-metre-high giant wild tea tree, i trunk measures 1.38 metres in circumference. More than 1,700 years old, it is the oldest wild te tree that has been discovered so far in the world. Near Banpo Village on Nannuo Mountain i Menghai, there is another tea tree, which is more than 800 years old. Researchers found it is th earliest living tea tree cultivated by man.

1

In 1990, China's first preservation nursery for big-leaf vaneties was set up here, where 607 big leaf tea trees are being preserved, including every species of tea tree so far discovered in the worl

Daluo, an Ancient Trading Port

We reached Daluo before supper. Daluo is a small town on the southwestern edge of Chin where the mountains and rivers are linked with those of Burma. Only about 300 kilometres fro Chiang Mai, the second largest city in Thailand, it offers the shortest overland passage fro China to other southeastern Asian countries. Trade in a large variety of goods between the governments and peoples of China and Burma flourished at this small town even in ancient time After becoming a provincial-level open port in 1991, Daluo has rapidly transformed. The streets ar now lined with shops selling imported daily necessities, cosmetics, arts and crafts, jade as well as special and local product and manufactured goods of Yunnan. Caravansaries of bygon days are nowhere to be found today.

2

4

We put up in a privately-owned inn, then crossed th Daluo River to see the boundary marker. Boundary marke No. 219 stands on a piece of flat land in the mountain marking the boundary between China and Burma. Severa dozen bamboo sheds had been erected in this small fla valley, where small commodities were sold by traders fro the two countries.

Our visit to the ancient trail of the Tea Caravan Rout leading to the north in an almost straight line, started fro this picturesque area of rainforest.

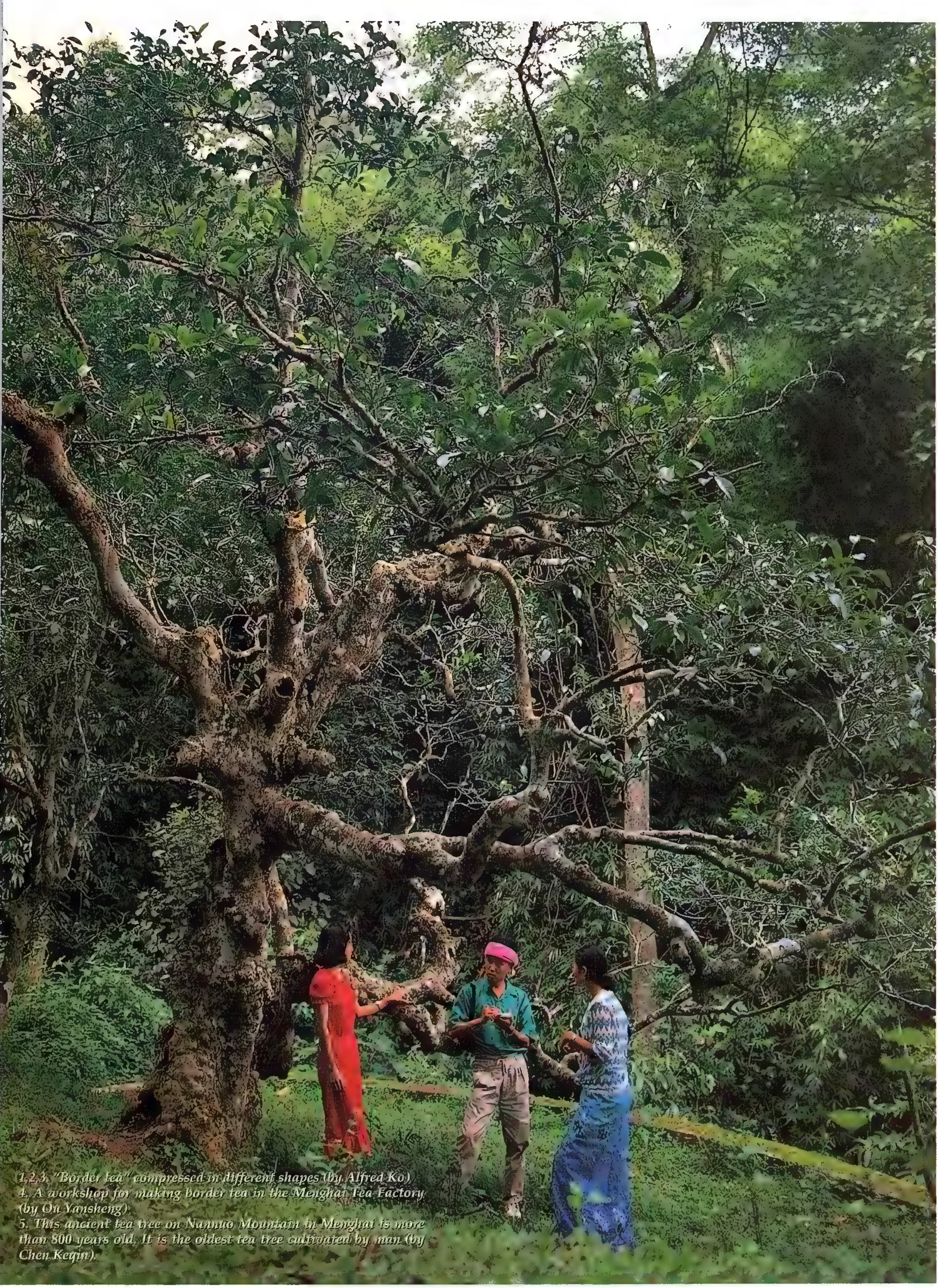
The King of Tea Trees and the Sour Tea of the Blang People

We climbed a steep mountain along a narrow path in order to reach the "King o Tea Trees", the oldest living tea tree in the world. The lofty and sturdy old tea tre stands in the virgin forest of the Dahei Mountain. It not only has attracted specialists t come from as far away as Japan to investigate, but is worshipped as a totem b tea-drinking peoples.

3

The Blang mountain village of Hesong is on a gentle slope where winding wooder troughs lead water to every wooden house in the village. The Blang people are ver friendly. We went into several of their houses to take photographs and were warml welcomed. Our attention was caught by the attractive clothes of the women. The close fitting tunic worn by the Blang women is more attractive than that of the Dai people The hips on the short tunic with an overlapping collar, decorated with embroidere patterns, flare slightly on either side. The tunic, matched by a straight skirt with horizontal stripes, accentuates the feminine elegance of the Blang women.

According to legends, the Blang people are the earliest tea cultivators. In th village, we tasted a very unusual kind of tea — sour tea. Only mature leaves ar chosen for this tea during the tea-picking season. The tea leaves are steamed first. After drying, they are tightly packed in a bamboo tube the size of a rice bowl. The bamboo tube is then sealed and buried in the ground for several months or even one or tw



5

1,2,3. "Border tea" compressed in different shapes (by Alfred Ko)
4. A workshop for making border tea in the Menghai Tea Factory (by On Yansheng)
5. This ancient tea tree on Nannuo Mountain in Menghai is more than 800 years old. It is the oldest tea tree cultivated by man (by Chen Keqin).

1

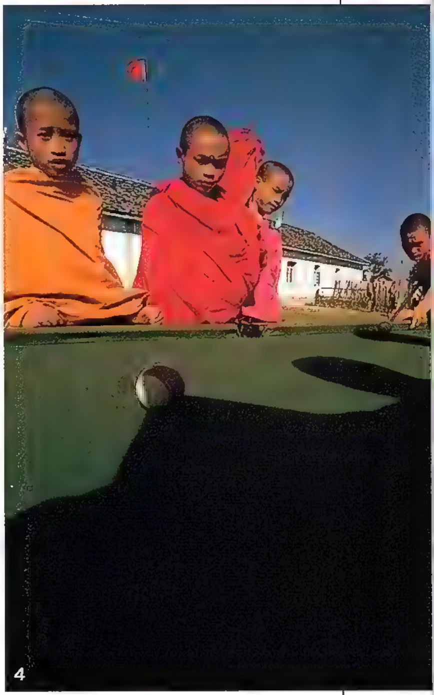
ears. On such happy occasions as the building of a new house or a wedding, the bamboo tube is dug out. atural fermentation causes the tea to become sour and puckery. The tea prepared from these fermented leaves therefore called sour tea, a Blang beverage for entertaining elderly and distinguished guests. The Blang peole do not say tea-drinking, but tea-eating, because the sour tea is drunk and the tea leaves are eaten.

When we called on a Blang man named Yanbudan, he had just unearthed a bamboo tube of sour tea. We isted it and found that we were not quite accustomed to it. A doctor of agricultural science from Japan's yokawa University made a special trip to the Blang villages to investigate sour tea. According to him, drinkig and eating sour tea is helpful in the treatment of cancer.

Two Types of Bamboo Prepared Tea: Dai and Hani

On our way back to Menghai, we stopped at Mandahe Village inhabited by the Dai people. On the upper orey of a house, we watched an elderly Dai man preparing tea. He roasted a freshly cut tea branch over an pen fire. When the leaves quickly softened, he tore off the leaves and put them in a boiling pot of water. The a so boiled had a strong bitter taste. There is another kind of tea sold on the Dai market. It is called cylindrial tea made by tightly packing best-quality tea leaves into a ection of young green bamboo. After a period of preservaon, the bamboo is broken and the tea leaves become a solid ylinder usually as thick as a rice bowl and about a foot long.

3


4

It was already dark when we returned to Menghai from aluo. The following morning, we went to visit Gelang iver District inhabited by the Hani people, and our visit oincided with the Getangpa Festival, the Hani New Year, nd the celebrations for the 40th anniversary of the founding f the district.

The wooden gate to the village was guarded by two large ivine figures carved in wood, a male and a female nude. he Hani people in the village were all dressed in beautiful lothes. The girls wore strings of silver bulbs and the young ien had feathers stuck in their headgear. Some Hani girls inned flowers made of colourful cotton yarn on our chests. hese were gifts for guests.

We had our meal in Mankesong Village, where every ousehold had prepared a banquet for the festival day. The able was laden with Hani specialties, such as crab meatalls, bird meat floss, sour meat, meat cooked in eggshells nd many wild vegetables. My favourite course was a rice ruel cooked with chicken meat, garlic, anise, Amomum, inger, chili and salt served as an indispensable main course ffered by Hani people to their guests.

After the meal, the two daughters of Piche, the village ead, prepared tea for us in traditional Hani way. The Hani eople like to drink strong tea. Only mature leaves are usually picked. After washing, teaming and drying, the tea leaves are put in a bamboo container and roasted slightly efore drawing. The tea so prepared is delicately fragrant and refreshing.

Leaving Menghai, we returned to Jinghong, the capital of Xishuangbanna Dai utonomous Prefecture. Jinghong is a beautiful city of flamboyant trees half encircled y the Lancang River. In the Dai language, Jinghong means "the city of dawn", and it as a busy airport with more than a million Chinese and foreign tourists arriving here very year.

Jinghong has been Yunnan's gateway to Southeast Asia since ancient times. Today, our overland international tourist routes and the Lancang River — the upper reaches f the Mekong River — bring Jinghong within the reach of international tourism.

Rush hour in the restaurants providing Dai food along the famous Manjinglan Street begins in the evening. When tourism began to flourish a few years ago, some Dai women who could sing, dance and had a head for business put up some bamboo tructures along the street and started restaurants. Within a few years, the street has ecome crowded with restaurants catering especially for tourists. Many of the restaurants are now gorgeously decorated and modern. Almost every restaurant has a song nd dance troupe, and it has become a custom for restaurant patrons to watch performances while they eat.

Yiwu, a Former Tea Trading Centre

From Jinghong we travelled on to Mengla, another frontier county of Xishuangbanna. Of the six famous tea mountains in Xishuangbanna, five are located

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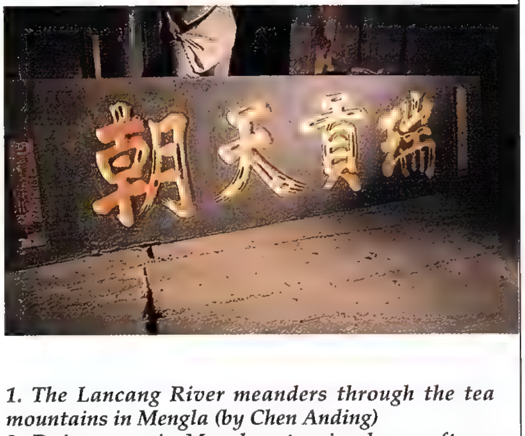

1. The Lancang River meanders through the tea mountains in Mengla (by Chen Anding)
2. Dai women in Mengla returning home after a day's work at the tea plantation (by Chen Anding)
3. This stone tablet in Wuyi records a conflict over tea tax between the government and tea merchants in the Qing Dynasty (by Xu Jinyan).
4. Young monks playing a game of pool in Xishuangbanna (by Alfred Ko)
5. A wooden board inscribed with the honorary official title of a former tea merchant still hangs at a home in the ancient town of Yiwu (by Li Yaobo).

in the Xiangming and Yiwu districts of Mengla County. In the Dai language, "meng" means a district or trib and "la" tea. So together Mengla means "tea district".

It is recorded in historical documents that tea was produced in large quantities in the Xishuangbanna are as early as 1,200 years ago. In addition to the six famous tea mountains, there were also the Nannuo, Bulan Xiding and Bada mountains, bringing the total number of tea-producing mountains in Xishuangbanna to 1 Most of the tea produced on these mountains was processed in Pu'er Prefecture, from where the processe tea was shipped to other places by horse caravans. The tea processed in Pu'er was therefore called Pu'er te The Blang, Hani and Jinuo peoples are the earliest tea cultivators and pickers.

When we arrived, the streets in Yiwu were virtually deserted. All the buildings in this small town were i the regular Han style with tiled structures surrounding small courtyards. We could hardly see any of th special architectural features of ethnic minorities.

The people in Yiwu speak with an accent characteristic of merchants from Lin'an and Shiping, who cam to Wuyi in groups and dominated the tea trade in the area. Most of these tea merchants later settled down i Yiwu. Their descendants now form the bulk of the Han people in Yiw and continue to speak with the accent of their ancestors.

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In those days, more than 100 households in Yiwu were engaged i the tea trade. There were more than 30 tea depots. During the tea-pick ing season, caravans of horses loaded with tea departed from the sma town every day. Today, the town's stone-paved main street is still intac but the paint on the wooden doors of the houses along the street is fade and peeling. Behind these doors live the descendants of the former te merchants. We knocked on the door of one of the houses. The head o the district introduced us to the owner of the house, who showed us copper steamer for steaming tea leaves, a stone slab for rubbing th leaves and some torn linen cloth which were all tools for making com pressed tea. In the dark garret we found a horizontal board of heav wood, on which was inscribed the honorary official title of an ancesto of the owner of the house. It was an official title bought with money b the tea merchant in order to raise his prestige and social status. The titl is of course useless now, and the family's tea business ceased to exist long time ago.

A short distance down the street stood a dilapidated old building Without the district head pointing it out to us, we would never hav known it had been the customs house in the Qing Dynasty. The silen passing of time had taken away the small town's prosperous tea trad The only visible sign concerning the local tea trade is the famous stone tablet standing in the guild hal which records the judgement passed on a lawsuit about 150 years ago involving tea merchants wh refused to pay the high tax on tea.

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Zhuge Liang Honoured in the Jinuo Mountain as the Originator of Tea

Jinuo Mountain is a green idyll. Every small path and village is pleasantly shaded by the dens foliage of green trees.

More than 10,000 people of the Jinuo nationality live in the 45 villages in the Jinuo Mountai According to the Jinuos, Jinuo Mountain is the birthplace of the Jinuo people. The Soul-Sending Son sung by the Jinuos generation after generation claims that the soul of every Jinuo comes from Jinu Mountain.

Nobody, however, seems to be able to explain why the Jinuo people honour Zhuge Liang, th famous strategist and prime minister of the State of Shu during the Three Kingdoms period 1,80 years ago, as the pioneer of tea-drinking. The Jinuo people are not alone in this. Almost all the legend about the six great tea mountains are connected with Zhuge Liang who is honoured as the pioneer o tea-drinking in many places, and a memorial ceremony is held in his honour at the Tea King's Festiva which falls on his birthday on the 23rd day of the seventh lunar month.

The Jinuos have their own particular way of preparing tea. Our host filled a newly cut section o bamboo with water and heated it over a brazier. A young man ran out and gathered a handful of te leaves from a big tea tree near the village. He wrapped the tea leaves in a phrynium leaf and roasted i

1. Dai girls steering light boats on the Lancang River, bringing back newly harvested tea leaves from the te plantations (by Wang Miao)
2. This old tea plantation in Menghai has a history of over 700 years (by Peng Zhen Ge).
3. The earliest known method for making tea, roasting fresh tea leaves directly over a fire is attributed to th Dai nationality in Menghai (by Peng Zhen Ge).
4. A divine female figure stands at the gate to Gelanghe Village (by Xu Jinyan).
5. An ancient sugarcane compressing machine in Menghai (by Li Yaobo).
6. Mother and daughter of the Hani nationality in Mengla (by Xu Ye).

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1. A tea shop with an unusual facade in the city of Simao (by Xu Jinyan)
2. A Dai horse caravan (by Liu Jianming)
3. A tea house in the old street of the county town of Pu'er (by Chapman Lee)
4. Women workers rubbing tea leaves in a small tea factory in the suburbs of Pu'er (by Chapman Lee)
5. Pu'er county town, once the distribution centre of Pu'er tea (by Peng Zhen Ge)

/er the fire. When it became yellow and soft, he put it in the bamboo and boiled it for a few moments. The tea prepared has the mixed fragrance of tea, phrynium, fresh bamboo and a slightly burnt smell. It is allegedly fective for curing someone who is not accustomed to the local food and water. Another Jinuo tea is called uonuopi, which is prepared by cutting young and tender tea leaves into shreds and soaking them in cold ater. The tea shreds may also be eaten mixed with salt and hot pepper. Lebuka is a tea made with mature aves where the tea leaves are fried first and then drawn in a teapot. It is good for sobering up from alcohol.

The Tea Bureau Nowhere to Be Found in Pu'er

Leaving Xishuangbanna we proceeded northward, shortly passing mao, before arriving at the town of Pu'er.

In Pu'er, we made inquiries everywhere on the site of the former overnment Tea Bureau. We hoped that if the bureau no longer existed e might still see a broken wall, a stone tablet or a foundation stone that arked its site. A 71-year-old local named Zhu Jun showed us an old ap of the county town in the Daoguang period (1821-1850), and from e map he deduced that the Government Tea Bureau must have stood the site of today's Industrial and Commercial Bank. However, no aces of the tea bureau can be found today.

The local resin factory now stands at Dadi, the spot where Tibetan orse caravans stayed for the night when they were in Pu'er. In those ys, each Tibetan caravan was composed of a great number of horses d men, who usually preferred staying in the open outside the town here there was water and grass to sleeping at an inn. In the evening, ey made a bonfire and danced to the music of the Tibetan guitar. eir bold style must had made a deep impression on the Pu'er people. hen a Tibetan caravan came into town, it always came in style with ongs beating.

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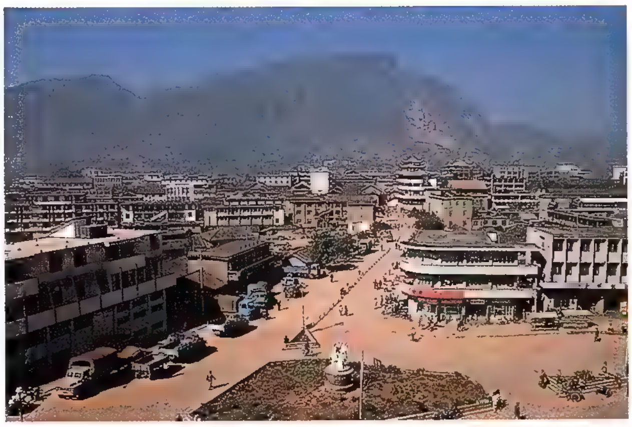
The Origin of Pu'er Tea and Tribute Tea

People who drink Pu'er tea like its rich, lingering flavour and mild ste as well as its curative effect. What is it that gives Pu'er tea its ique flavour? In the old days, when Pu'er tea was transported by orse caravans from the production areas to the town of Pu'er, the caravans had to travel through tropical rain forests. The moisture in the air used the tea leaves to ferment and enriched its flavour. As people ked the flavour of the naturally fermented tea, the tea producers bean to introduce a fermenting process for Pu'er tea. Unlike green tea hich is best when the leaves are fresh, the older the Pu'er tea, the betr its flavour.

It is recorded in historical documents that a total of 32,500 ilogrammes of Pu'er tea was delivered to the imperial court as a tribte every year during the Qing Dynasty. This Pu'er tea was prepared ainly from tea leaves produced in Nannuo, Youlai and Yiwu. Each ear, Pu'er Prefecture had to prepare eight varieties of tribute tea, ssisted by the deputy magistrate of Simao.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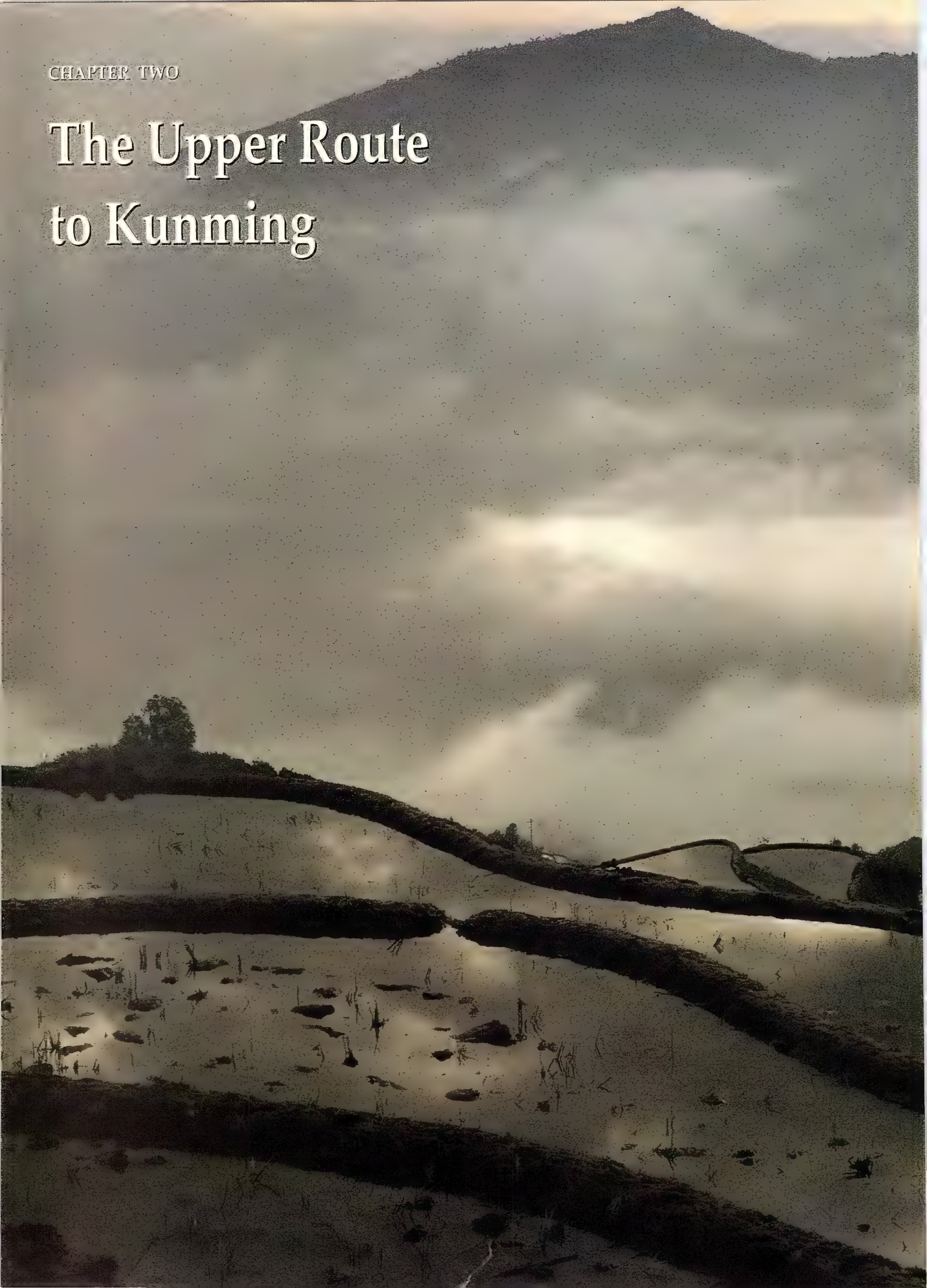
Preparations for collecting and delivering the tribute tea began nmediately after the Clear and Bright Festival every spring. The tea as first delivered to the county government, where the tea was acked in yellow brocade affixed with the county government seal. The ackages were then taken to the Pu'er prefectural government and afxed with the seals of the prefecture and Weinan circuit government efore they were loaded onto caravans. A caravan transporting the tribte tea flew apricot-yellow flags and headed for the north in an impresive procession. Along the way, it stayed in the courier stations free of harge and was entertained by the station masters. The caravan drivers sually carried some extra tribute tea with them and gave them to the *amen* along the way as bribes or sold them to earn some money. They ompleted their task and returned to Pu'er after they had delivered the ribute tea to the Yunnan provincial government, where the packages ere affixed with the seal of the provincial government and a special fficial was assigned to deliver the tea to the capital. There must be nany stories on the delivery of tribute tea from at time, but few have een passed down to the present generation.

ranslated by Tang Bowen

CHAPTER TWO

The Upper Route to Kunming



Picturesque terraced fields in Yuanjiang County (by Alfred Ko)

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1. The Upper Road on the Tea Caravan Route has long given way to a highway (by Peng Zhen Ge).
2. Ancient horse gear in the old town of Kongqueping in Mojiang County (by Peng Zhen Ge)
3. Dayangjie Town, where past caravans crossed their paths in old days (by Li Yaobo)
4. Yi women on the ancient Upper Road for tea caravans (by Li Yaobo)
5. Tough work and the rare sweet sound of horse bell on the ancient Tea Caravan Route in today's Mojiang County (by Peng Zhen Ge).
6. A "chessboard" on the ancient route, believed to have been left by caravanners of bygone days (by peng Zhen Ge)

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At Pu'er the Tea Caravan Route forks to the Upper Road and the Rear Road. The Upper Road leads to Kunming by way of Mohei, Mojiang, Yuanjiang, Xinping, E'shan, Tonghai and Yuxi; while the Rear Road leads to Dali via Jinggu, Zhenyuan, Jingdong, Nanjian and Weishan.

Following in the Footsteps of Past Caravans

During an archaeological survey conducted in 1983, a post road was discovered at Nakeli and another at Cha'antang. The Nakali post road, which was part of the Tea Caravan Route from Pu'er to Simao, extends on and off for 30 kilometres, with its 1.4-metre-wide surface paved with flagstone and pebbles. Connecting the road from Pu'er to Mohei, Cha'antang Road leads to a fort situated strategically at 1,960.7 metres above sea level.

The highway along which we were driving now merged with the ancient trail as we reached a mountain covered with luxuriant trees. This is where the Cha'antang Road used to be. The roadside restaurants and teahouses are no more, reduced to debris as traffic on the road gradually thinned to nothingness. A tiny tea plantation is perhaps the only legacy of the former bustling tea business. According to old tea growers on the plantation, this was where merchants and caravans from different parts of the country crossed their paths, including Hans from the shore of the Lake Dianchi, Tibetans from Tibet, Dais, Hanis and Blangs from Xishuangbanna, Bais from Dali, Huis from Weishan and Yis from Nanjian. Camaraderie was spontaneous when they met, despite their differences in language, attire and drinking habits.

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The ancient road at Cha'antang is not paved with flagstones but large pebbles of different sizes. A coat of green moss has gathered over the pebbles, but depressions left as deep as two inches by horse hoofs are clearly visible.

All the caravans were equipped with weapons on the road, for an ambush on this perilous terrain can bring fatal consequences.

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Salt Mine and Ancient Caravansaries

The Upper Road is easy to access because it runs parallel to the famous Kunming-Daluo Highway. Having driven for 20 kilometres from Pu'er, we arrived at the Salt Mine at Mohei, which has been in operation for the last 260 years. For a time, the salt produced in this mine enjoyed the same popularity as the Pu'er Tea.

Despite being tiny, Mohei Town used to be the seat of Pu'er County frequented by hundreds of horses which came to fetch salt.

Ten kilometres from the town stands Kongqueping, where in ancient times couriers changed horses or rested. The fields were lost in a riot of golden flowers, and the pervading silence was only broken by the occasional tinkling of bells of buffaloes. During the heyday of tea caravans, at least 1,000 horses and their drivers stopped here for the night every day. To accommodate this heavy traffic, 28 caravansaries and five restaurants were built in this tiny place.

During our visit to the ancient road we did not see a single caravan, perhaps because they had long given way to automobiles travelling on modern highways. Saddles and bells used by the past horse drivers are now hanging on the walls of some of the old caravan-

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saries at Kongqueping as reminders of the place's legendary history. Small caravans, however, can still be spotted at places where the road is too steep and the forest too dense.

Shellac, as Sought After as Tea

Over the lunch table during our stay at Mojiang we were told there was a Caravansary Street in town. We hurried over to have a look: no inns. The street has been renamed as Ring Road, and it is flanked on both sides by brick-and-tile houses built in recent years. The Mojiang people take great pride in the Yunzhen Tea, a local speciality which is among the best-known teas in Yunnan Province. The leaf is rolled tightly until it looks like a needle with its tip shiny with a silvery tint; when brewed in hot water, it tastes unusually refreshing and sweet.

Another Mojiang speciality, shellac, was also much sought after by merchants from the outside world. South and Southeast Asia are the world's major shellac producing areas. In China, Yunnan Province accounts for 90 per cent of the nation's total shellac output where Mojiang is the largest shellac producing centre.

We left Yuanjiang at eight in the morning and swung onto a mountain trail to look at the terraced fields on the slopes of the Ailao Mountains. The trail was full of twists and turns and so narrow that the trees on both sides were within easy reach. It was country fair day, and many Hani men and women were making their way for the town of Dayangjie, the venue for the fair.

Dayangjie turned out to be a small town with narrow streets, flanked by vendors' booths on both sides. The crowd kept snowballing with new arrivals. Many came on horseback and tethered their horses to roadside trees. The street was so packed that there was hardly enough room for our car, which we had to park in the distance.

In the street my companions and I each went our own separate way. My attention was soon diverted to the varied costumes the Hani women were wearing. For headwear alone I saw five or six different varieties. Their coats fell roughly into two categories: one with buttons down the front, the other buttoned up on the right. Trousers were calf-length and everyone was wearing puttee leggings and belts embroidered with elaborate floral patterns.

Tonghai: A Prosperous Commercial Centre

Travelling further north, we arrived at Tonghai, a small county town which nestles against the picturesque Xiushan Mountain. The buildings on the mountain were built during the Han Dynasty more than 2,000 years ago. Ancient trees formed a titanic canopy over the bluish rocky mountain slope. In the teahouses, old citizens were nursing cups of tea in a manner reminiscent of ascetics of ancient days.

Life in Tonghai is affluent and congenial thanks to the pleasant natural conditions and well-developed commerce. The local Chamber of Commerce holds a reception every year, after which the entire population of the town turns out for a day of merry-making. While operas are staged in open, the streets come alive with lion and dragon dancers in a festival which was originally started by merchants who had prospered in the county. Recently the town rose to new fame for its disco team composed entirely of old ladies. Wearing dark blue homespun topped by jackets made of green flannelette, they danced on bound feet in a manner that recalls figures in old folk paintings.

The Route for Kublai's March into Yunnan

The fog started thickening shortly after we left Tonghai, and after we climbed up the Qutuo Mountain visibility was still dim. Only the outlines of the upturned eaves of some cottages on the mountain could be seen. On the top of the mountain Qutuo Pass lay behind a mysterious veil.

Close by the foot of the mountain lies Xingmeng, the tiniest of all townships in Tonghai County and the largest Mongolian community in Yunnan Province. Ninety-eight per cent of the township's 4,889 residents are Mongols, descendants of Yuan-dynasty soldiers garrisoned at Qutuo Pass.

1. Dai women in the street of Xinping County, their gracefulness accentuated by the embroidered belt they wear around the waist (by Liu Jianming)
2. Nadam Fair: tradition remains alive and kicking among descendants of Mongol soldiers garrisoned in Yunnan during the Yuan Dynasty (by Liu Jianhua).
3. The famous four-eyed well in the county seat of Jianshui (by Peng Zhen Ge)
4. An old teahouse in Tonghai County (by Liu Jianhua)
5. An ancient bridge on the Upper Road of the Tea Caravan Route in Jianshui County (by Peng Zhen Ge)

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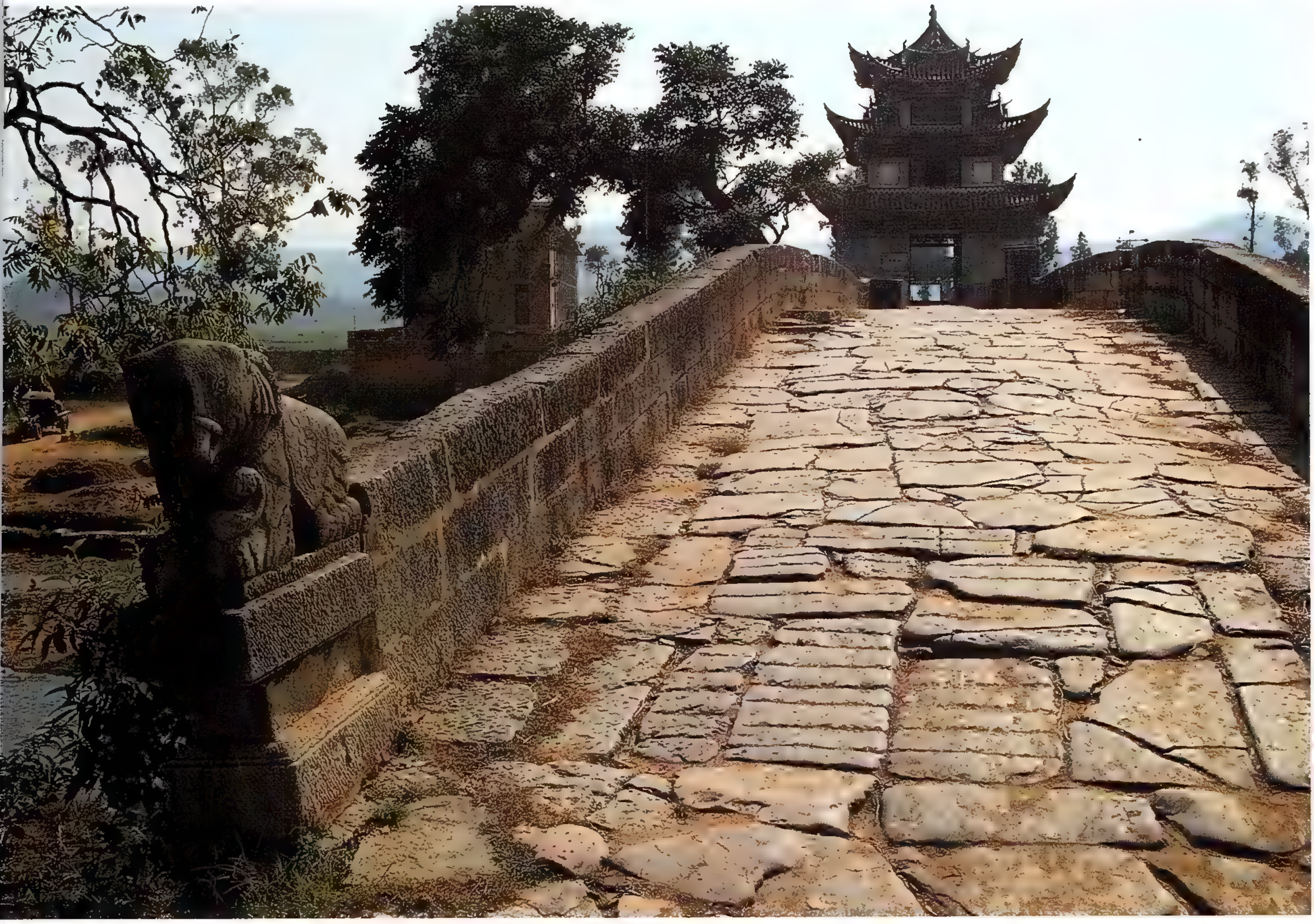
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1. *Wuwei Road in the old part of Kunming (by Liu Jianming)*
2. *The streets of Kunming are frequented by visitors attired in distinctive ethnic costumes (by Liu Jianhua).*
3. *This ancient slabstone street in Kunming was once the entrance for the horse caravans.*
4. *A bird's-eye view of the annual Kunming Commodities Fair which exhibits not only famous Yunnan cigarettes and Pu'er tea but also modern means of transports (by Liu Jianming)*
5. *Cigarettes produced by the Yuxi Cigarette Factory are a major commodity shipped by today's caravans (by Alfred Ko).*

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In the year 1252, Kublai, grandson of Genghis Khan (1162-1227), came southward with a 100,000-strong army and eliminated the 300-year-old Dali Kingdom, thereby putting Yunnan under Yuan rule which lasted for 128 years. Much of the route by which Kublai's men marched into the province overlapped the ancient trail taken by tea-hauling caravans.

In 1381, Ming-dynasty troops routed the Yuan army by the shore of the Baishi River. The Mongol soldiers, their hopes to return to their homeland having been dashed, had no alternative but to settle down in the province. Most of them gradually assimilated with the local people. Those who garrisoned Qutuo Pass, however, found their way to the western shore of the Qilu Lake. Today, their descendants speak the same dialect as the locals, and in appearance it is hard to tell them from the natives. The fact that their ancestors came from the remote northern Chinese steppes is but a remote memory in their hearts. Qutuo Pass, on its part, is the reminder of their ancestors' glorious history.

Yuxi Cigarettes Sell Like Hot Cakes

On our way from Tonghai to Yuxi we saw vast tracts of tobacco fields. We were told this was where China's best tobacco was produced. Asia's leading tobacco factory, the Yuxi Cigarette Factory, is situated here.

On our visit to the tea-hauling trail we learned that in ancient times it was routine for caravans to transport local tea out of Yunnan and bring back cotton yarn, medicines and cigarettes from India. Most of the cigarettes shipped into China were made in Britain. Today, it is the cigarettes made by the Yuxi Cigarette Factory that are sold briskly out of Yunnan. In Yuxi we saw a truck bound for Tibet loaded high with cigarettes. The Hongtashan brand cigarettes lead the nation in sales volume, enjoying good sales on the world market as well.

A high-grade expressway has shortened travel between Yuxi and Kunming to a little more than one hour. Wanting to have a keener taste of history, we chose to travel along the old road. It happened to be a country fair day in Kunming. The nearer we got to the city, the more horse-drawn carts we saw. By the time we reached the area called Xiaobanqiao, the traffic slowed down to a standstill. Pedestrians and vehicles alike had to squeeze their way forward through hundreds of horse-drawn carts that had filled the road.

Kunming: Old Teahouse a Rarity

Clusters of tall buildings form a magnificent skyline over the landscape of Kunming, the political, economic and cultural centre of Yunnan. Modernization is the order of the day for the city. In bygone years Kunming was the hub of Yunnan's four major caravan routes; today it is the starting point of two trunk highways, one to eastern Yunnan, the other to southern Yunnan.

Kunming's scenery is picture-perfect, and it is like spring all year round. The local people take great pride in all the amenities nature has endowed on their hometown.

In the eyes of old townspeople, Kunming's changes are breathtaking. The charm of rural repose and a sheltered existence that had bathed the city as a remote settlement is no more. One street after another has been torn down to make room for new buildings. The old Kunming intimately familiar to old residents is fast consigning itself to history.

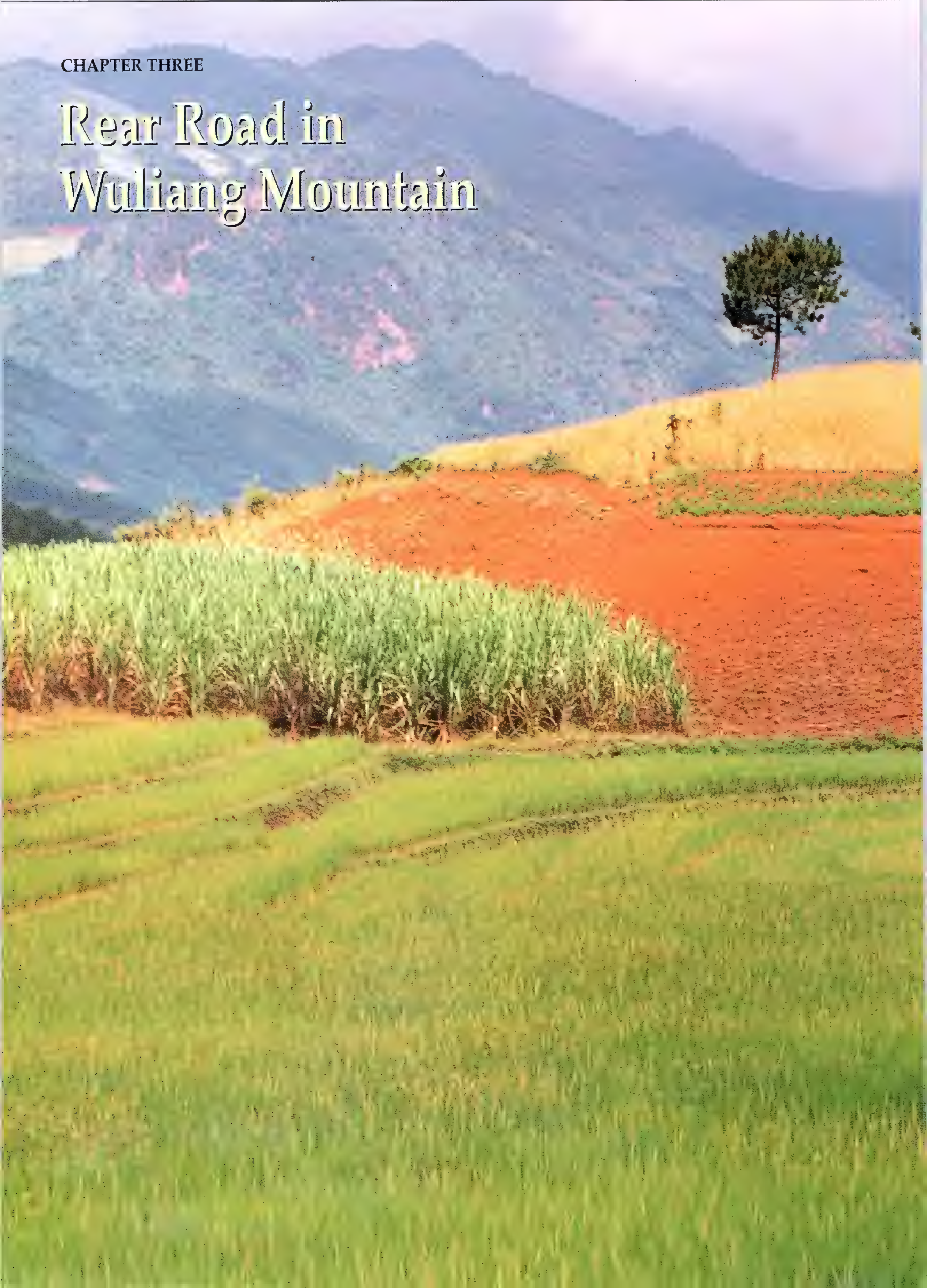
We paid a visit to the city's oldest teahouse before it was demolished along with the entire Shunchen Street. There we met an old tea drinker who told us that in its early years, Kunming's streets were narrow and their flagged surface rubbed so smooth that on rainy days they became very slippery for horses. Horse caravans did not belong only to the mountains. In the old days the tinkling of bells in Kunming's streets always heralded the arrival of some caravan from afar, and the city's caravansaries and inns were often crowded with caravanners.

Today, caravans are nowhere to be seen. Horse-drawn carts are denied the right to Kunming streets. The caravansaries of old have long been converted into restaurants or garment shops. The only reminders of the city's venerable antiquity are the few remaining teahouses, where water is boiled in long cylindrical kettles, and where Yunnan's big-leaf tea is served in lidded bowls. Nobody knows for sure how long these old teahouses will remain in business.

Translated by Ling Yuan

CHAPTER THREE

Rear Road in Wuliang Mountain



Autumn scene at Wuliang Mountain (by Liu Jianhua)

1. An ethnic Dêrnang woman fetching water with containers fashioned out of bamboo trunks (by Liu Jianming)

2. Roast tea: a favourite among the Miao people living in the Wuliang Mountain (by Liu Jianming)

3. A female member of the Va ethnic group picking tea in the Wuliang Mountain (by Chen Anding)

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Our journey along the Rear Road took us away from surfaced highways to dirt trails that crisscrossed the Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau. It was winter and the weather rather dry. As we sped along, our car kicked a cloud of dust several dozen metres into the sky; in the car the dust was so choking that I had to cover up my mouth and nose with a towel.

Beyond the subtropical rainforest the smudge of mountains looked immense and serene. It was so quiet in the valley that the sound of copper bells being struck by a wooden clapper could be faintly heard in the distance. Probably some horse or buffalo was hauling its load to a place inaccessible to motorized traffic.

Tea planting is a major source of income for people in Jinggu County. There each township boasts its own famous tea — red tea, green tea, and tea roasted on fire or simply dried in the sun, which is still sold to Tibet, Qinghai and Gansu.

Kainan's Old Bridge and New Road

Driving northwest from Jinggu County, we hit upon a canopied bridge of unknown age. The local people call this dozen-metre-long affair, Yellow Dragon Bridge.

As we drove on, a stone bridge came in sight. The Guangfu Bridge, as it is known, is 44 metres long and 2.6 metres wide, and was built during the reign of Emperor Qianlong (1736-1795) of the Qing Dynasty. The bridge is situated in a place called Baomu (Mother Hugging) Well, a former centre of caravansaries. The caravans have long disappeared. Only the ruins of stoves of a former salt factory remain there. With their yawning mouths, these casual relics of antiquity are thus left like wrecks upon the distant shore of time.

We decided to stay for the night at Zhenyuan, a county town on the eve of being resettled elsewhere. The instant we emerged from our car, we burst out laughing at each other, for a layer of dust had settled on our bodies, flecking our hair and brows with greyish white. Someone joked that we ourselves had become as ancient looking as the tea caravan trails.

We drove on from Zhenyuan to Jingdong by way of Kainan Township. The wide highway suddenly hit upon a narrow bridge which sat astride the Kainan River like a bottleneck. The bridge was part of a trail for caravans in the past, but today it has become part of a modern highway. In fact, many new highways in Yunnan were mere expansions of old caravan trails. Even some railways in the province were built along these trails. Little did the caravanners and merchants of bygone years know that by leaving their footprints in the mountains they were rendering a good service for posterity by laying the groundwork for highways and railways to be built hundreds of years later today.

Vestiges of Ancient Trails Everywhere

Everywhere we went in Jingdong during our two-day visit,

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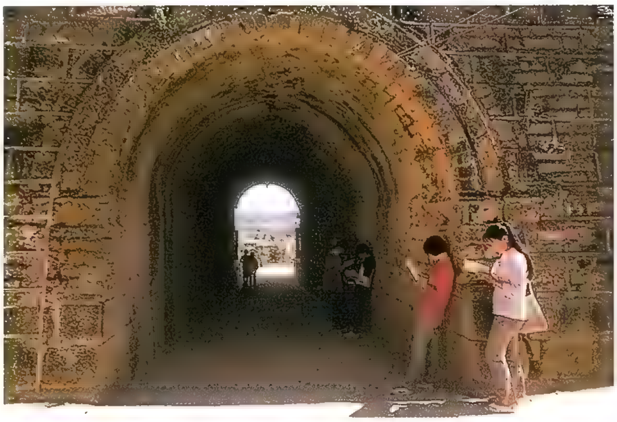
4. Primitive dwellings in a mountain village inhabited by the Va people (by Liu Jianming)
5. Vestiges of an ancient tea caravan trail are still visible on the Huangcao Ridge in Jingdong County (by Ou Yansheng).

1. *The ruins of a local governor's palace in Yintai (by Xu Jinyan)*
2. *The Dai people living in Jinggu celebrate their ethnic festivals in a way different from those living in Xishuangbanna (by Ou Yansheng).*
3. *Celebrating Torch Festival in Nanjian (by Liu Jianming)*
4. *A pagoda hugged by a tree: this rare scene is found in Jinggu (by Li Yaobo).*
5. *The Yi People in a Singing Contest, a Qing-dynasty fresco at the Weibao Mountain (by Xu Jinyan)*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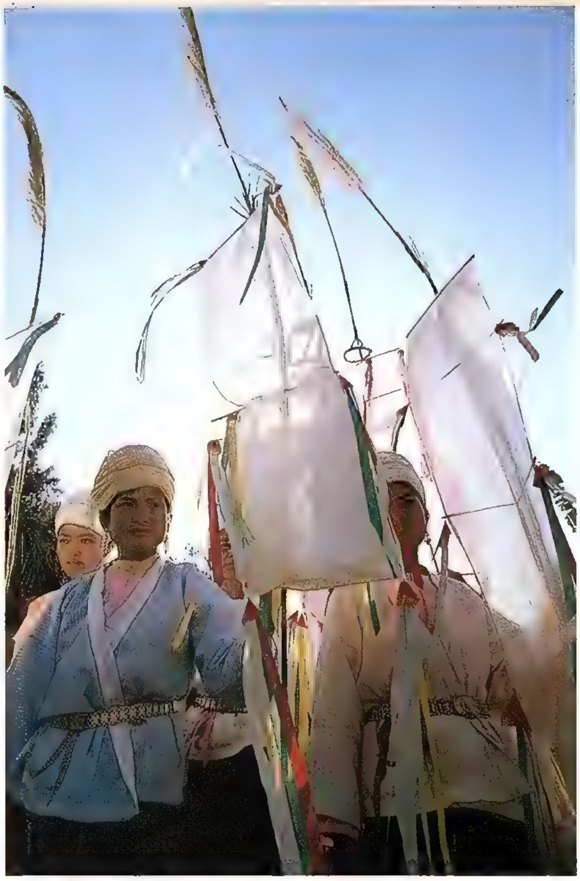
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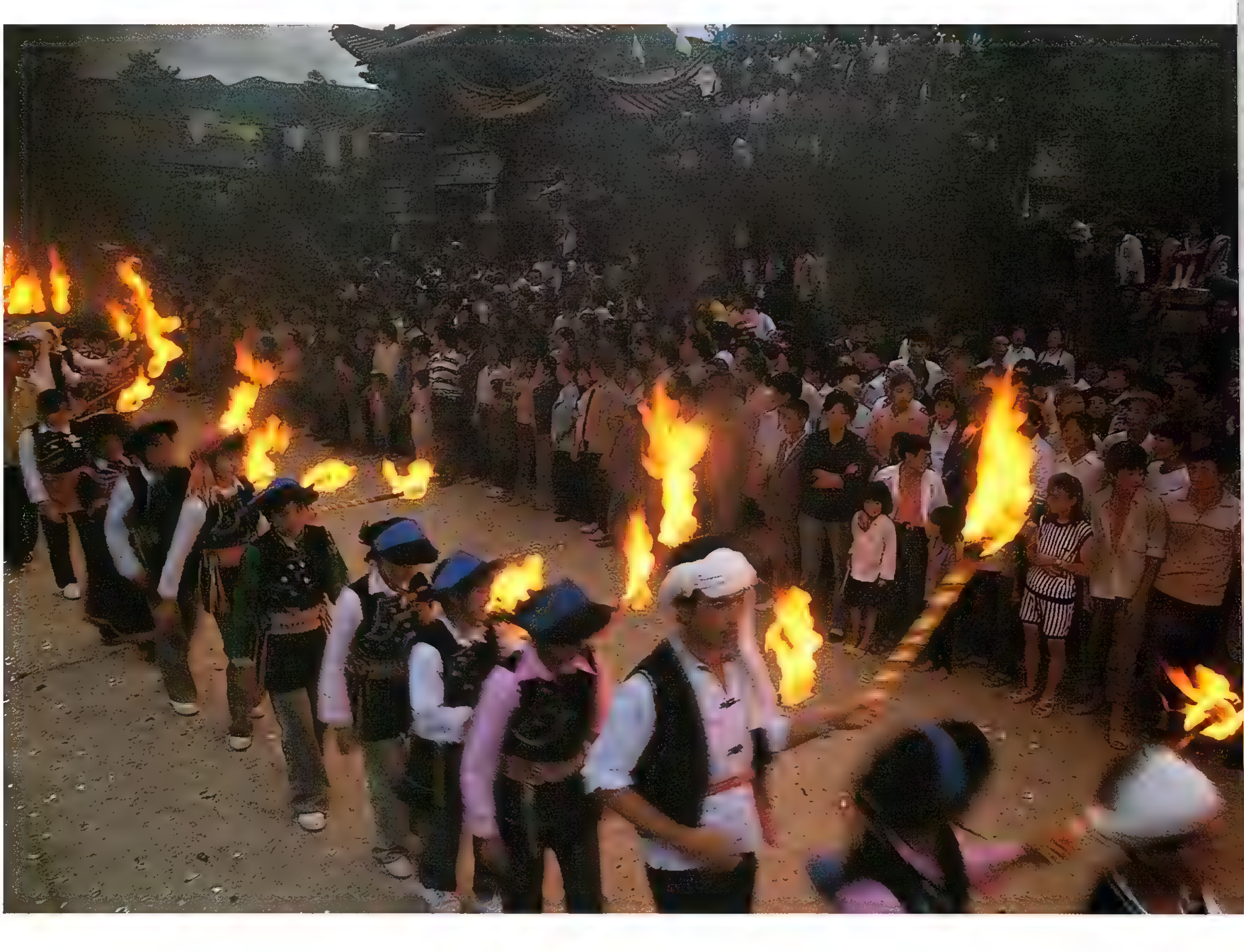

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we could feel the presence of caravans and the trails they followed in the past.

The flagged Qingliang Street is steeped in the history of these caravans, but today not a living soul could be found there. Save for the slanting rays of the morning sun, the street lay in cheerless desolation. The wooden facades of the street shops bore the marks of decay, and the couplets pasted on doors were peeling with age, their red colour having long faded. At the street corner we bumped into a couple of passers-by who told us that during its heyday Qingliang Street bubbled with activity. The Tibetans always arrived with the longest caravan, and it usually took them two to three hours to march through the entire length of the street. Their arrival was accompanied by such awe that merely by saying "There comes the Tibetan caravan!" a mother in the neighbourhood could easily hush her crying baby into silence.

According to the local history book, some six to seven decades ago various parts of Jingdong County were frequented by caravans whose horses were counted by their several hundreds and whose task was to ship local specialties out to Xishuangbanna or places then under British jurisdiction, and return with cigarettes and cotton yarn. For a time the trails in the county's virgin forests were trudged by thousands of horses all the year round. Many caravanners died away from home, but some of them prospered from the thriving transportation business.

We were surprised to see the county's city gate standing among a cluster of new buildings in the courtyard of a middle school. The city gate was built during the Hongwu reign (1368-1398) of the Ming Dynasty; the motifs carved in bas-relief on the gate were the only evidence of the gate's time-honoured history.

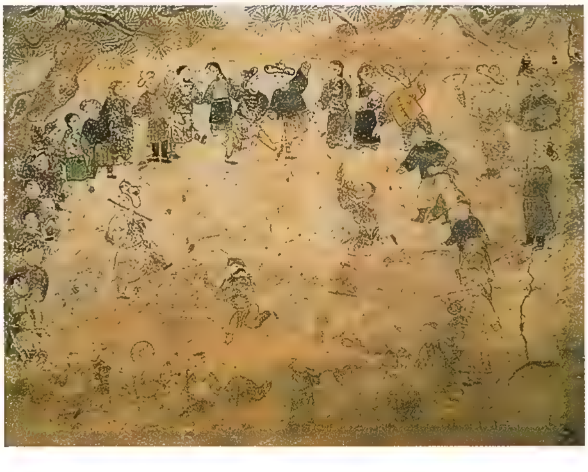
We puffed and panted as we trudged along a lengthy footpath, simply to look for the famed plank trail on Huangcao Ridge. To our great disappointment, only a few metres were left of this trail. We had the feeling that had our visit been postponed for a few years, we would have seen very little of the ancient caravan trail.

Drinking a bowl of tea laced with brown sugar in the morning and at night is a habit among people living in the western mountains of Jingdong County. "I would feel weak without drinking this bowl of sweet tea," they are often heard saying. Probably a little exaggerated, but the fact is, many local people enjoy a long life because of this unique drinking habit.

An Ancient Post Road in Wuliang Township

In the mountains of Wuliang Township, the higher we drove up the slopes, the more luxuriant the vegetation cover beside the road looked. The jumbled mountain ranges and green valleys cocooned in lush forests extended as far as the eye could see.

On an ancient post road which runs by Xiaohedi Village we met He Zhengzhong, a 62-year-old man who as a teenager joined a tea caravan which travelled between Pu'er and Xiaguan. Recalling his past life as a wayfarer he recited the proverb: If you choose to travel across the vast grassland, you should first marry your wife to someone else. According to him, in those days once a caravanner had hit upon the road he had to be mentally prepared never to return. To the hazards of epidemic diseases, perilous natural barriers and death by starvation were added feared and frequent attacks by raiders. What disturbs He and his former fellow caravanners is



1. *A horse caravan in Weishan (by Ou Yansheng)*
2. *This man, who in his younger years was the leader of a caravan composed of the Hui people, is a proud grandpa today (by Ou Yansheng).*
3. *The county town of Weishan was first built during the Ming Dynasty (by Ou Yansheng).*
4. *At the gate of a Muslim mosque we met another former caravan leader (by Li Yaobo).*

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the fact that local bridegrooms today have decided to use as auspicious wedding talismans, bronze bells. These used to be tied to the necks of the horses in the lead of a caravan.

In Nanjian County we saw quite a few caravans hauling firewood to a rural fair and visited a sizeable horse market. Among all the places we visited during our journey, Nanjian is where draught animals still handle much of the transportation task. In the past, the county's Shenzhou Ferry crossing on the Lancang River provided the only passage for caravans on their way to Yunnan's border areas. The county was also where Li Wenxue, leader of a peasant rebel force during the Qing Dynasty, paved a flagged road. The road for those who wanted to go and fetch salt from Jingdong is known as the Southern Post Road. The county's Western Post Road led to the province's border region by way of Weishan, Yunxian and Fengqing; on this road we saw a well-preserved arched stone bridge 15 metres long, three metres high and two and a half metres wide. Nobody could tell when this bridge was built, but the accumulated marks left by the elements are enough to testify to its venerable history.

The Lot of Caravanners' Descendants

We believed that the local people had been all forced to become horse drivers. Only after a visit to Huihuideng Village did we realize that to join a caravan or start one's own was the cherished dream of many young people in the old days. Some of them had bartered family property for horses and after years of hard work, returned as rich men. With money and the new ideas they had acquired from the outside world, these successful caravanners helped transform Huihuideng from a cultural and economical backwater into a prosperous village. They not only sent their children to school, but also gave financial support to poor fellow villagers so that they could do the same.

We had lunch at a restaurant in the village. The meal was superb, and the bill was unusually low: 24 yuan for seven people. Some ancient houses are still there as reminders of the village's past prosperity. It is a pity that all the village's famous caravan leaders have died. The few horsedrivers of those years have become old. Asked about their past experiences, they acted as if it was beneath them to talk about their good old days. But the business acumen of the old caravanners is still flowing in the hearts of their children. Instead of wielding a whip on horseback, however, some of them have become bus drivers.

Weishan: the Cradle of Nanzhao Kingdom

Talk about the Nanzhao Kingdom, and the city of Dali instantly leaps to mind. It is little known, however, that Weishan was the real cradle of the kingdom.

The Yanggua River (the upper reach of the Honghe River) meanders its way southward through the land of Weishan, which takes the shape of a narrow basin. Dusk had already set in when we arrived, and in the setting sun the river sparkled like a silver chain.

The county seat of Weishan is picturesque in its arrangement. The tall drum tower offers an overview of the town, which is studded with ancient temples and exquisitely landscaped courtyards of Ming-dynasty architectural style in perfect condition. The Weibao Mountain, situated seven kilometres south of the county seat, is a serene-looking sanctuary of Buddhist monasteries and Taoist shrines. The slope in front of the Weibao Mountain was where the founding king of Nanzhao Kingdom had tilled the land during his early years as a Yi farmer.

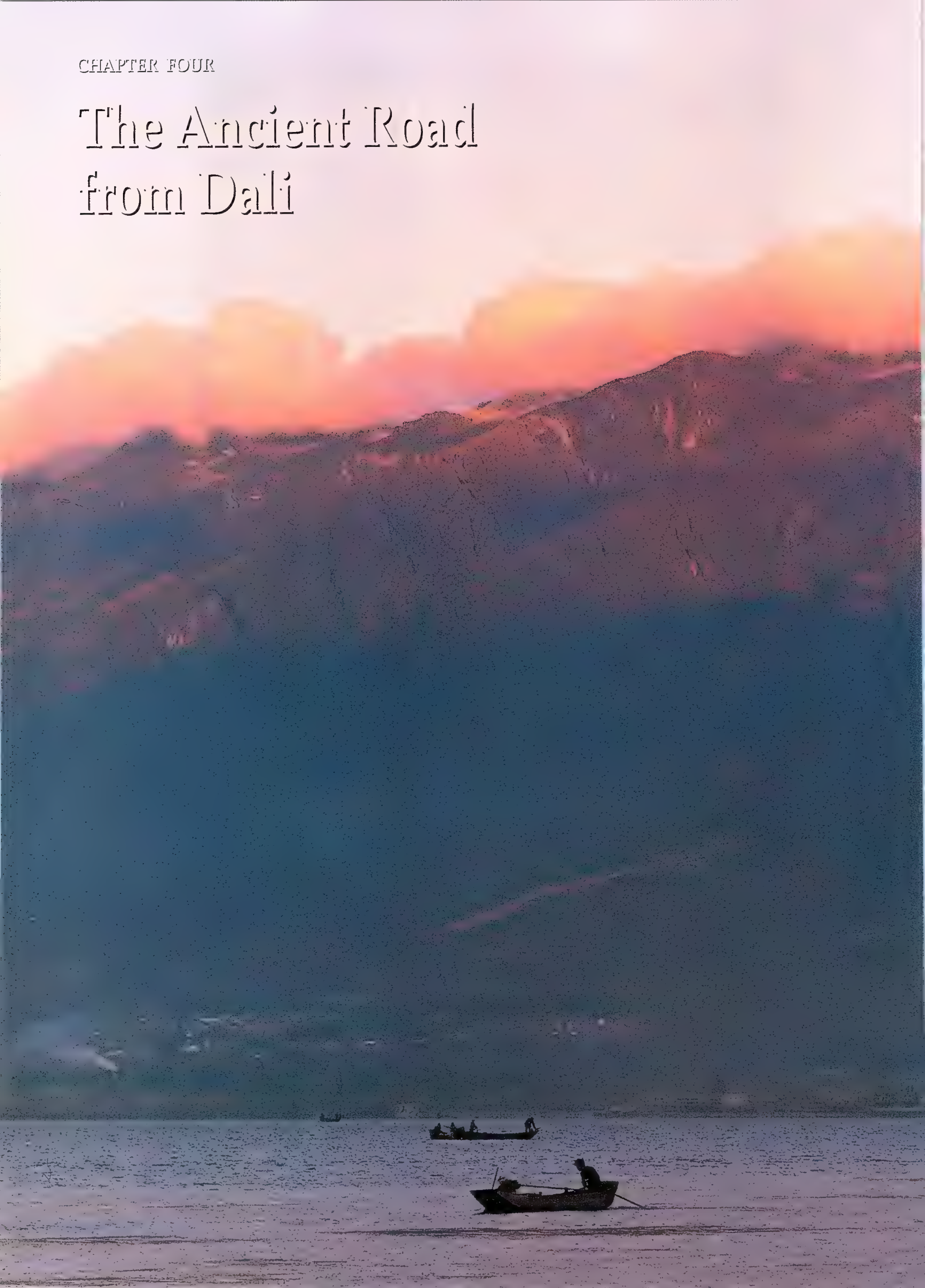
Tourism in Weishan is handicapped by the lack of wide and smooth roadways. However, the scarcity of tourists has helped the ancient county town to retain its sequestered repose and simple and unadorned way of life.

Our car chugged laboriously up the steep mountain. Dali was only score of kilometres away, but it took us three hours to get there. The high altitude of the terrain, however, offered us a perfect view of the landscape and the silvery Diancang Mountain and the jade green Erhai Lake were clearly within view.

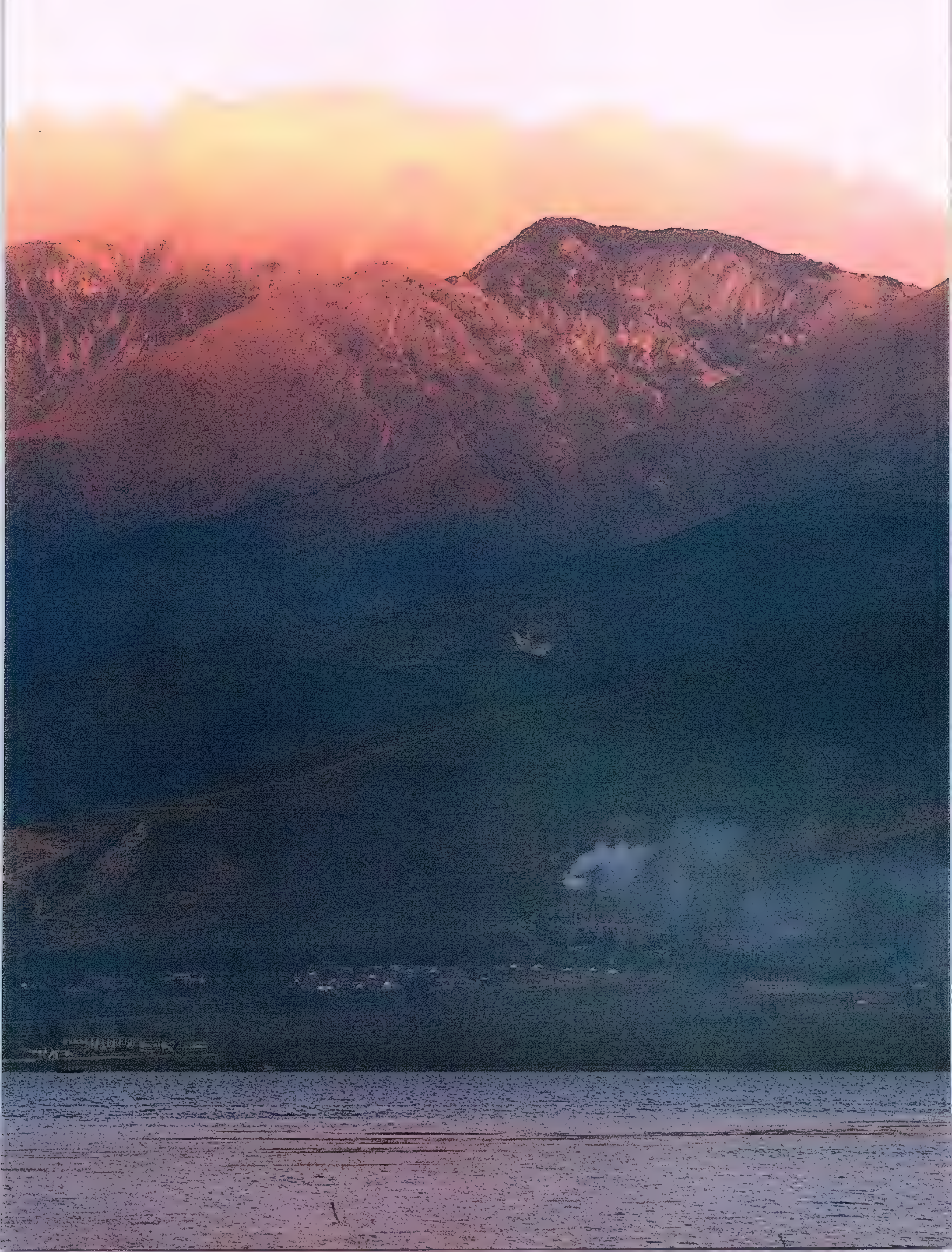
Translated by Ling Yuan

CHAPTER FOUR

The Ancient Road from Dali



The Cangshan Mountain and Erhai Lake are the most fascinating scenic spots in Dali (by Wu Jialin).



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At last, we arrived at Dali the most important town on the ancient Tea Caravan Route.

We met with many friends at Dali. The purpose of our visit was plain as the ancient Caravan Route well-known around here. Dali's Xiaguan Tea Factory has a history of 52 years. Entering the vapour-bleare workshop, we watched the tea processing while listening to the history of Tuo tea accounted by the directo Lin Qingcheng. Tuo tea which has evolved from Tuan (ball) tea popular among the locals is also known a "the Girls' Tea". It is said that in old times girls, in preparation of their dowry, would hide a bit of tea for the "bridal purse" during each of the tea pick-ups. The tea thus collected would be rolled into ball-like mass to b sold at the market.

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Three Course Tea

It is a must to drink the Three Course Tea at Dali. Three Course Tea came into popularit during the period of Nanzhao Kingdom when it was first served exclusively at the court an gradually became popular later. The inhabitants of Dali have set up rigid requirements for thi beverage: the best well water is used, and the best tea used is that planted near Gantong Monastery. To prepare the tea, you will need walnuts, honey and ginger. The first course of te tastes bitter, the second sweet, and the third delicate with a lasting flavour. The tea drinking a ritual conveying some popular meanings of life!

The Tea Caravan Route is a commercial route, which shows the great contributions made b the merchants. Generally speaking, it was the big commercial firms that hired the horse caravans for transportation, and some of the firms had horse caravans of their own. "Xizhou Caravans" well-known throughout Yunnan Province, once hired thousands of horses to transpor goods every year. Following this cue, we came to the town of Xizhou.

In fact, Xizhou is a large and rich village where the houses built by the Bai nationality represent a local style in Chinese folk architecture. Every house is composed of three rooms with screen, a carved gate tower in front and the floor paved with marble slabs. The old houses her have preserved their original elegant style .

The Tribal Idol at Xizhou

We were lucky to have come here on the very day of welcoming the tribal idol, who was modelled afte the first daughter of the important merchant, Mr. Dong. The tribal idol is not a supernatural deity, but a ordinary and secular person. The great merits of the family have brought happiness and fortune to thei offspring, and hence raised ther from the human to a semi-divin status enjoying homage. Th tribal idol returns home ever year and her reception has become an activity imbued full o human feelings.

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The reception was fixed at fou o'clock in the afternoon, but a noon the streets already began t bustle with people, coming an going amidst clouds of smoke an incense mists. We took refuge in house by the road side and foun ourselves in the company of former tea merchant from Lijiang who started in the tea business a

1. A folk festival day in an ancient street of Xizhou (by Alfred Ko)

2. The town of Xiaguan was once the market place for gathering and distributing the tea sold to the Tibetan regions (by Alfred Ko).

3. A local restaurant enveloped by trees and flowers (by Peng Zhen Ge).

4. The ancient city of Dali was once the starting point of the Tea Caravan Route entering Tibet (by Wang Miao).

5. Residential houses of the Bais located at the bank of Erhai Lake (by Liu Jianhua)

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1. Tuo tea continues to use its original trademark (by Peng Zhen Ge).
2. Different varieties and packaging of Tuo tea (by Alfred Ko).
3. A large-scale horse market in Eryuan City proves that horses are still important for today's transportation (by Xu Jinyan).
4, 5. Processing of Tuo tea in the Xiaguan Tea Factory (by Alfred Ko).

乙級
雲南省下關西大街一一一號

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雲南沱茶
YUNNAN XIAGUAN TEA FAC

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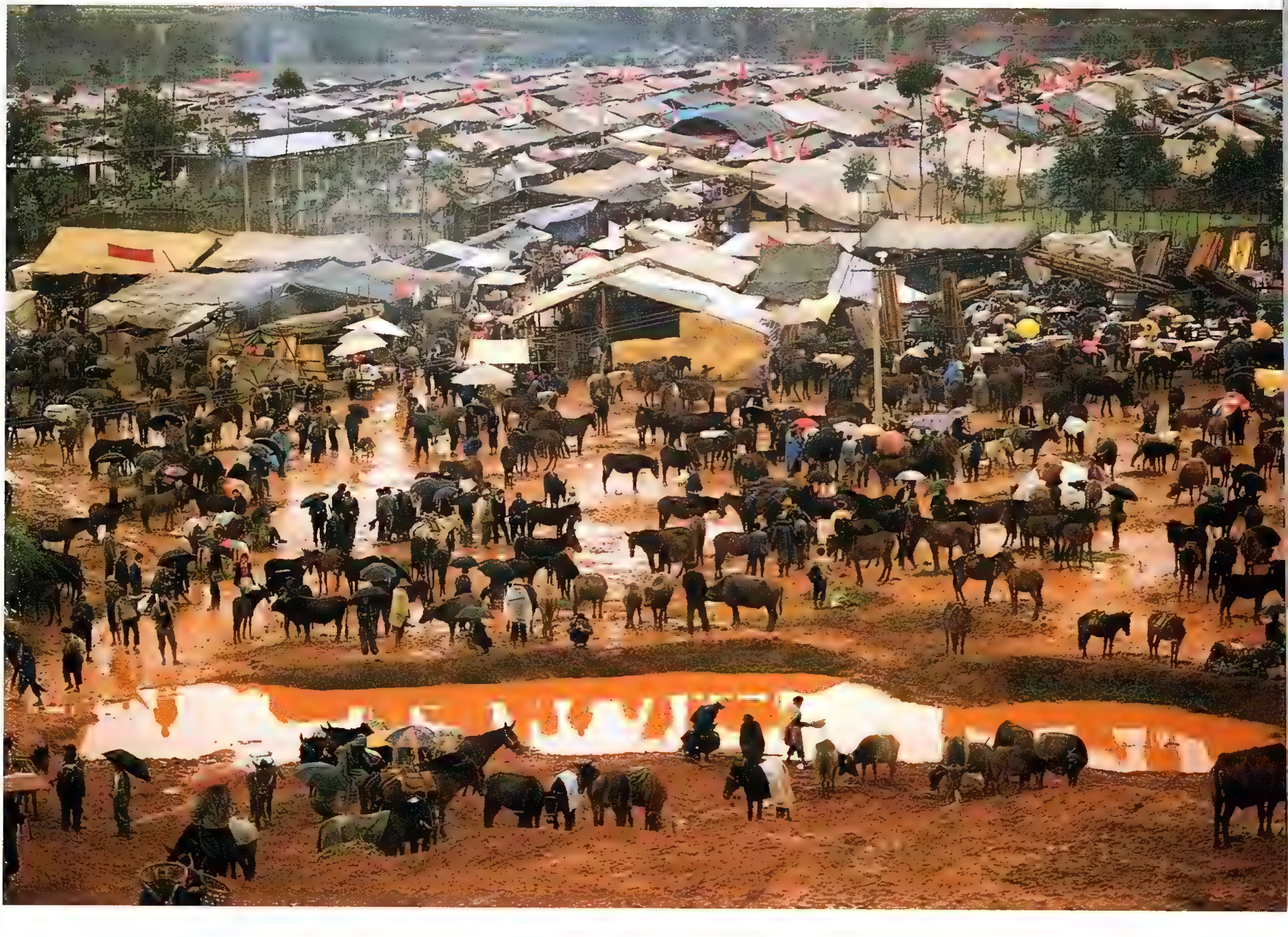

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he age of 18. He told us that he used to buy the raw tea at Pu'er and Fengqing and bring it to Xiaguan to be rocessed into compact tea, and finally took the tea to be traded at Lijiang. The horse caravans of the Bais do ot enter Tibet because the roads are tortuous and the horses cannot carry hard packs, which uses frames and oxes to carry the tea.

The largest firm at the time was run by the Yan Family. Several other firms were lso engaged in the tea business and their branches extended not only to Kunming, ijiang, Weixi and Dêqên, but also to Nepal, India and Burma. The firms worked losely with the horse caravans. There were also Tibetan horse caravans that came irectly to the village. The merchants were often on journeys, and some merchants of izhou settled down in Weixi and others in Bamda. There were more merchants from he Heqing firms than from Xizhou firms who came to Tibet on business, and many of hem remained in Zhongdian, Dêqên and even at Kangding in Sichuan and Qamdo in ibet.

By this time the drums and trumpets roared to a climax, headed by the yellow treamers which were followed by women saying prayers, while men played *suona* (a hinese clarinet), three-stringed banjos, and Yunnan-style durms. The palanquin carried by people, at the centre of which was seated the clay tribal idol clad in a yellow obe. The virtues and happiness of the Dong girls account for efficiency in handling ommercial business and the natural accumulation of their wealth. The selection of he girl of a commercial family as the tribal idol shows the great interest placed on the evelopment of commerce.

5

The Horse Drivers in Zhoucheng and the Foreigner Street

It is an ideal choice to stay at Tianzhuang Hotel in Xizhou, which is located not far rom Zhoucheng at the site of the Dongs' old family house still looking elegant today. he Bais are well-known for their tie-dyeing of fabrics for clothes. A friendly woman accompanied us to the ouse of Duan Jilin.

The old man climbed to the attic and took down from the wooden framed photos from above the family ncestor niche. On the photos there were 50 or 60 young and stout Bai horse drivers. Reflecting back to their ork then, he told us: "The road was so tortuous and the heavy snow so cold that we could hardly move on. ith just a bit of negligence, one would fall into an abyss below the precipice."

The old city of Dali is a place where most of the foreign tourists like to gather. Huguo Road is the wellnown Foreigner Street. Less than 100 metres long, the street is lined on both sides with various stores dis- laying national costumes made of tie-dyed cloth and handicrafts, and Western-style restaurants which are ecorated and designed with a natural and graceful homely atmosphere. The old style houses have been onverted into restaurants, hence giving a strong sense of assimilation and fusion of different cultures.

We chose the Mary Restaurant for a meal, dining on French bread, Italian pizza and spaghetti. The tall nd slender boss, Ma Yongli is more familiar known as Mary by foreigners. With a little knowledge of oreign languages she taught herself, she can chat with foreigners, and with her self-taught Westerntyle cuisine she has won many customers. She told us that she is Hui by origin and from Weishan. Her randfather, a merchant in the horse caravan business, died at the age of 89 years.

In Foreigner Street there are other small Western-style restaurants, which are all full of tourists in the vening. Owing to the word-by-mouth rating by the tourists and introductions by tourist pamphlets, these estaurants enjoy a certain fame abroad attracting foreigners to feast here. Looking at the names signed on their walls by customers from various countries, you feel as if you were in one of the United Nations building, New York.

1

The Ancient Relay Route at Jianchuan

The relay route from Jianchuan to Lijiang is recorded in documents to have been opened up during th Western Han Dynasty. The route stretches 40 kilometres long within the borders of Jianchuan Count Leaving at the North Gate of Jianchuan, it enters Lijiang, and then diverges at Baihanchang with a rout extending through Shigu to Weixi and the other route passing throug Lijiang.

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The ancient route is the gate to transport between Yunnan and Tibet, an also a gathering and distributing fair where governments in every dynasty pai special attention to the construction of roads. There is a five-arch old bridg with a history of 200 years, which was a vital thoroughfare to Lijian Zhongdian and Weixi, and is still firm and solid and in constant use as part of highway.

Setting off from Dali early in the morning, we reached Eryuan for breakfas The way from here to Jianchuan where it turns right to Heqing was a rout beaten by caravans.

The Old Caravansary in Songgui

The town of Songgui, located on the way from Dali to Heqing, is an important station of the relay route and a busy trader's market on fair days. Th old streets look as if they were covered in grey dust. We started to look fo the Yang Family Caravansary after an old inhabitant pointed the way. W arrived at a courtyard, roomy in size with a row of wooden shelters heape with odds and ends. Surely, this must be the place where the horses wer once tied.

The caravansary was often a noisy affair in the past during the busy seasons of horse caravans. An old man who had a stall outside the gate told us tha when the caravans came here every day they kept the inn of Yangs busy for eight years running.

Searching for the ancient sites at the town of Heqing, we came to Huashi Village outside the Nort Gate. We were told that Yang Ziguang, the caravan head then and his brother Yang Weiguang, ofte carried goods to Lijiang, Weixi and Dêqên, and fetched tea from Pu'er in southern Yunnan. It is a pit that we met only the 73-year-ol son of Yang Ziguang. He told u that there were only a few caravans run by the Bais and othe nationalities who went into Tibet. There were two reasons: th different way of life and the us of alternative transport for shifting goods. The Bais caravan used to carry hard packs wit each horse carrying nearly 10 kilogrammes. As the paths in Tibet were steep and in som places so narrow, only a hors with a soft pack weighing 7 kilogrammes could pass.

Translated by Gu Weizhou

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1. A fair in Zhoucheng (by Peng Zhen Ge)
2. The caravansary at Heqing still running today (by Alfred Ko)
3. A horse caravan passing through the street at Longweiguan Town in Dali (by Yang Kelin)
4. The life-long experience of the horse driver, Duan Jilin can be seen through these photos (by Yang Kelin)

新年进步
大理五前马帮

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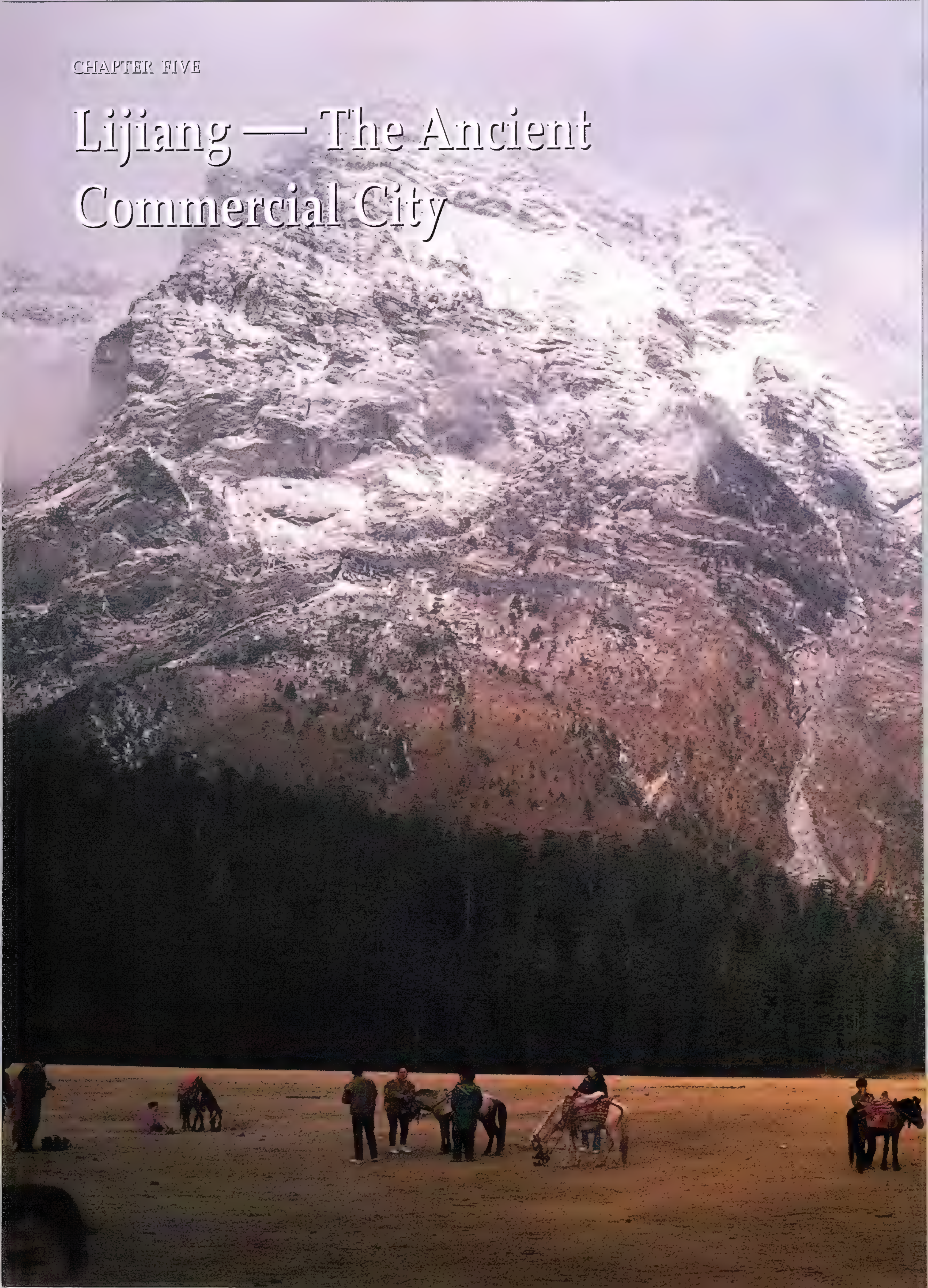
CHAPTER FIVE

Lijiang — The Ancient Commercial City



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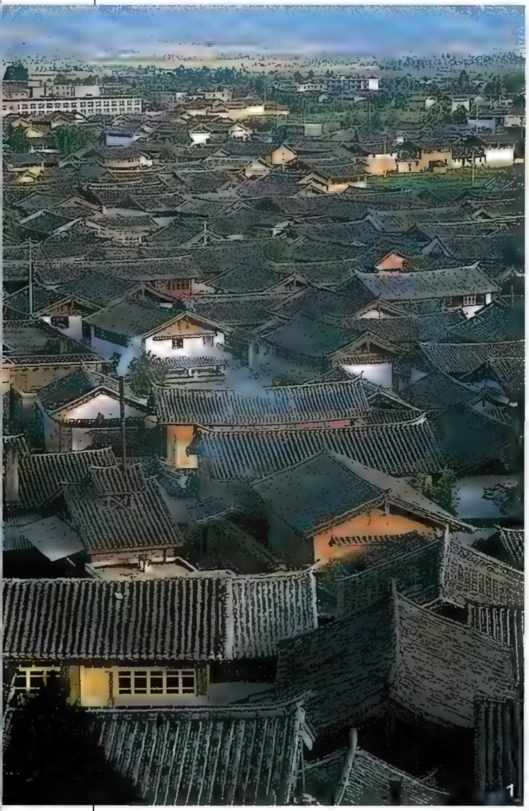
In the past the Russian scholar C. Peters in his book *The Forgotten Kingdom* described how difficult it was when h followed a horse caravan to get to Lijiang. Today, however, it takes just a day and a half from Kunming to Lijiang by bus an there will also be an air service between the two places soon. Lijiang is no longer an unfamiliar place for tourists.

Looking for Traces of the Old Days on Sifang Street

Scarcely had I entered Lijiang when its symbol, the snow-capped Yulong Mountain came into sight. Towering magnificently o a wide expanse of flatland in Lijiang, the mountain ranges 35 kilometres long from north to south and 12 kilometres wide fro west to east, with 13 high peaks looming one upon the other in the mist and cloud. Its main peak, Shanzidou at 5,596 metres abov sea level, is the highest peak in China at the same latitude. Its top is perennially covered with snow. The Naxi nationality regar the mountain as the incarnation of the Guardian God "Sanduo", and the snowcapped landscape has bred many enchantin legends about "The Third Kingdom of Jade Dragon". Horse drivers have helped to spread those stories along the ancient road, a seen in the regions of Zhongdian and Kangba and Lhasa where Sanduo God temples were built by merchants and horse driver

The old city of Lijiang, Dayan, was built at the beginning of the Yuan Dynasty. With Sifang Street as its centre, four stree radiated in four directions linked up by many lanes and stone bridges. The clear water from the Black Dragon Pool ran righ through the city from west to east. The streets and lanes are narrow but long, with simple and ancient dwelling houses an centuries-old shops. On the streets paved with multi-colour cobblestones many stories have been le by the imprint of past horse hooves. We entered Sifang Street early in the morning and walked roun till noon. Led by two local scholars, we looked for ancient traces in the small city and found Xiagua Street that used to specially engage in trading compressed tea, and Guanwen Lane where the caravansaries were concentrated. The tea shops, however, had gone, and so had the caravansaries an the Big Stone Bridge where Tibetan caravans used to rest.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In the past, silver ornaments, copper pots and locks made in Lijiang were sold as far the triangl border region between Yunnan, Sichuan and Tibet. We went to Coppersmith Street then famous f producing copperware, but no jangle of metal could be heard now. Instead, we found a stretch o dwelling houses in its place. However, in the Lijiang National Ornaments Factory we met two silversmiths who still employ traditional methods to make silverware. Although over 70 years old, the tw masters were meticulously cutting and polishing a silver bracelet and a silver ring.

Old Tea Merchants and Caravan Leaders

Entering elder man Zhao Qinxiu's small courtyard, we were surprised to find it was a typica Naxi dwelling house with four compounds and five skylights. The floor was paved with slab-stone and the doors made of carved wood. In the courtyard there were many plants and flowers in blosso including several rare orchids. Zhao Qinxiu, 76 years old, had been the boss of a trade company. H had a shop in Calcutta and lived there for six years, and could speak English and simple Hindi. Hi trade company dealt mainly with tea and had its own horse caravan to Tibet. Zhao Qinxiu told u that there were two routes from Lijiang to Dêqên: one via Zhongdian and the other Weixi. Both road were very difficult to walk. The caravan the trade company first organized consisted solely o Lijiang-bred horses which encountered bandits who not only looted the horses and goods but als killed the caravan leader. At that time, the bandits robbed horse caravans in the areas from Dêqên t Xiangcheng in Sichuan. Once the caravans entered Tibet, there were no more bandits. In order t safeguard the transport, all horse drivers carried guns with them. The trade company once employed a very formidable man to be its leader called Yang Yanhou, a very valiant, husky fellow. Wit Yang as the leader, no bandits dared to rob the caravan again.

After hearing the story I became very eager to meet such a legendary and dauntless figure. I ha met many horse drivers, but so far ha not come across a caravan leader.

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Unexpectedly, that afternoon I di meet an ex-caravan leader, the 82-year-old Yang Zhichao. When asked abou the past, he eloquently recounted:

"I went to Lhasa five times. I als went to Pu'er and Simao. Usually w went to Tibet in the fourth month of th lunar year and came back from Lhas in the ninth month, making a trip almost once a year. Generally, caravan hired their leaders, and the latter di not have horses themselves. However as a leader, I owned over 30 horses When we went to Tibet we mainly carried tea with us and took some granulated sugar and dry vermicelli made from bean starch as presents. When we came back we bought whatever w

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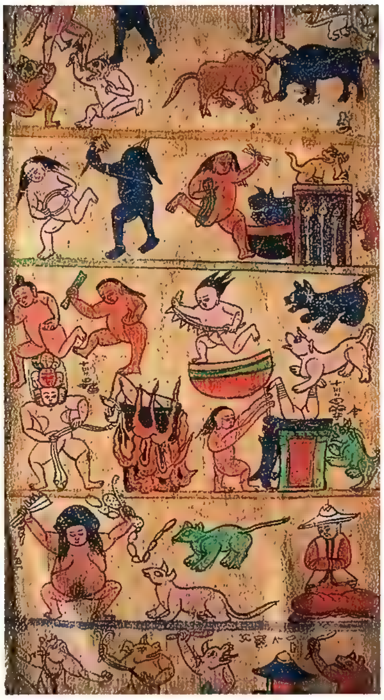
1. *The ancient Dayan Town where horse caravans used to gather (by Peng Zhen Ge)*
2. *The Naxi ancient music band in Dayan Town (by Peng Zhen Ge)*
3. *An old street inside the city of Lijiang (by Wang Miao)*
4. *Historical paintings of the Naxi nationality (by Peng Zhen Ge)*
5. *The Russian scholar C. Peters followed a horse caravan to Lijiang and gave a truthful portrayal of the dangerous Tea Caravan Route, in a book he wrote later.*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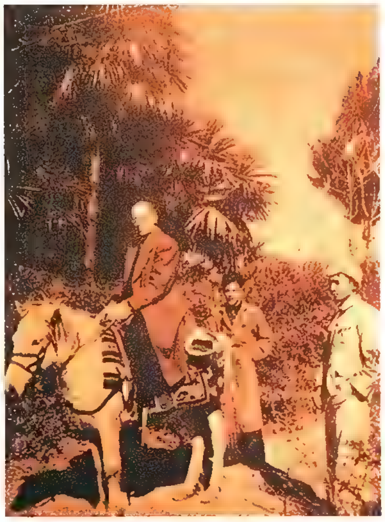
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ound suitable such as cotton cloth, woollen cloth and cigarettes. We walked day after day, and it took us nore than 100 days to get to Lhasa. It was quicker on the way back, but it still took 70 to 80 days. From Lijiang to Dêqên there were 18 stations, each station being 30 kilometres apart. It was also 18 stations from Dêqên to Qamdo. The road branched off at Qamdo, and it still needed over 30 days if you wanted to Lhasa.

"We put up for the night wherever the grass was good. Sometimes caravans teamed up so as to look fter each other. Although people in the caravans came from different nationalities including Naxi and Tibetan, they got along well with each other. Sometimes they slaughtered an ox and had a feast together.

"The conditions along the road were very harsh. Food was particularly scarce. Sometimes the feed and food supplies we brought ran out, so we exchanged tea leaves with local Tibetans for our food. Tibetans loved Yunnan tea leaves, especially Pu'er tea and Tuo tea which were sold at fairly high prices.

"Once we entered Tibet, the road became safe; no waylaying along the roadside. Lamaism had strict rules, and all Tibetans ›eyed them. Sometimes when our horses suddenly died, we just put the packs on the roadside, laid a few stones on them and left em there till we found someone to fetch them. They would never get lost. "

The Ancient Cave Music — Taoist Ritual Music

After walking around, we became very tired and sat down to take a rest in a small teahouse at the entrance to Sifang Street. The ıngings on the wall of a neighbouring curio shop caught my attention. They were an old saddle and halter decorated with quisite silver ornaments and coloured silk balls. The wood and leather were somewhat worn but they were obviously a won-ːrful set of horse gear used in the old days. We did not find any caravansaries or shops for treating sick horses or making ›rseshoes. Neither did we find any shop selling horse gear. The set of horse gear on the wall of the curio shop was in fact put on le as an antique.

Because of the ancient Tea Caravan Route, the Lijiang people are very fond of drinking tea and relish many different methods d flavours. The Naxi people are fond of roast tea, salt tea, milk tea, buttered tea, snow-tea brewed with plants from the snow-pped mountains, and scholar tree seed tea.

Just then, an enthusiastic and hale man came to us on a bicycle and asked us in English whether we would like to attend a ncert on ancient cave music that evening. The man was none other than Xuan Ke, a scholar of the Naxi nationality who was aking earnest efforts to popularize Naxi ancient music. Xuan Ke was famous in Lijiang. Although over 60 ars old, he was as energetic as a young man. He spoke fluent English and made introductions in English to reigners every night when the ancient music was played.

The Naxi's ancient music was a kind of cave-scripture music, which had a long history. A Taoist ritual usic, it had been very popular among intellectuals in all parts of the country but declined gradually after estern sciences were introduced to China. Nevertheless, Taoist ritual music had been well preserved in the cient city of Lijiang. We were surprised to find that among the players of this ancient music there was an 82-ar-old master, Zhao Yingxian, who had also been a caravan leader in the old days.

2

Shigu Town at the First Bend on the Yangtse River

The Jinsha River flows northwest to southeast, but it turns round abruptly at Shigu (Stone Drum) Town in jiang to run northeast. The big bend of the river has been known as "The First Bend on the Yangtse River", d the little town has been famous for its ancient ferry and the Red Army Ferry.

By the riverside at the town there is a high square platform with a white marble drum standing at the ntre. Tradition has it that this was the place where Zhuge Liang of the Three Kingdoms period ferried his ›ops across the Lushui River. After Zhuge Liang took Nanzhong, he erected this stele to keep down the fferent tribes.

This little town built along the slopes of the mountain, has been a busy market place on the ancient route ıce remote times. Forests of lush green trees stand alongside the Jinsha River protecting the dike. Elderly ›ople told us that these forests of willow trees were more than 100 years old. It is said that this little town is e last picturesque place on the ancient Tea Caravan Route in northwest Yunnan.

Today's Horse Caravans at Tiger Leaping Gorge

During our stay in Lijiang we regularly ate at Mother Fu's restaurant, a well-known restaurant in town. A ıtive of Kunming, Mother Fu had lived in Lijiang for 30 years. She had been praised by tourists for both her isine and warm attitude towards customers. In the morning, after having finished our last meal, we took up e apple pies she gave us and em-ırked on the road to the Dêqên ateau.

Our first stop was the world-fa-ous Tiger Leaping Gorge. As we ›t off the bus we heard the roll-g roar of the Jinsha River. Dash-g into the 17-kilometre-long Ti-ːr Leaping Gorge between the ılong and Haba snow moun-ins, the river has a drop of over .0 metres. From the riverside to e top of the snow mountains, the eight difference is 3,600 metres.

The ancient Tea Caravan Route in
e soul-stirring Tiger Leaping
orge (by Yang Chubin)
A lama of the Red Sect at Yufeng
emple in Lijiang (by Xu Jinyan)
The Lijiang flatland viewed from
e distance (by Peng Zhen Ge)

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The gorge, the deepest in the world, has three parts — the upper, the middle and the lower — with 18 dangerous shoals and grotesque-shaped rocks. At the entrance to the upper part of the gorge there is a huge rock lying in the middle of the river. Legend has it that once a fierce tiger leapt over the river from here, hence the name of the gorge.

Sheer cliffs stand one after the other on either side of the gorge. On one side of the cliffs is a plank road just wide enough for one man and a horse. When horse caravans came to this crucial section, they sounded gongs beforehand to avoid a clash. If two caravans met face to face, the consequence would be disastrous. In recent years, to meet the needs of tourist development, a section of the plank road between the middle and lower parts of the gorge was slightly broadened, and it was on this section of road that we came across a horse caravan, the first we had ever seen. Although it consisted of only 30 or so horses, it impressed us immensely walking on the narrow, long ancient road amidst the jangle of horse-bells.

When we stopped to eat at the bridge end at the mouth of the gorge, we saw some traders purchasing pine mushroom. This delicate wild fungus is a very profitable export mainly to Japan. To keep the freshness of the pine mushrooms, the buyers must load the fungus onto trucks as soon as they purchase it and deliver it to Kunming, from where they change it to plane and transport it abroad. This is a business horse drivers had not thought of in the past.

The Story of Baishui Terrace

If you climb over the snow mountains from the Tiger Leaping Gorge, you will soon arrive at Baishui (White Water) Terrace, the birthplace of the Naxi's Dongba Culture. This place has not only drawn many people to sightsee its unique sinter scenery, but also attracted numerous pilgrims with its fame as the "Dongba Sacred Land".

Upon entering the Baidi Gorge, the first thing that came into sight was a huge "Jade Mirror" lying sparklingly on a mountain ridge. On closer inspection, we found the dazzling jade mirror was actually a terrace formed of calcium carbonate sinters. Between the narrow lines of sinters there were pools of spring water, ranging from the size of a bowl to the largest pools which stretched like paddy fields. The sinters were piled layer upon layer like gathered clouds and thick snow. On top of the terrace was a flatland of about half a kilometre long, and in the middle of the flatland was a "Heavenly Pond" formed by strings of springs. Spring water came out from under a willow tree in the upper part of the terrace forming a small pool.

In the 11th century, Dingba Shiluo, founder of the Dongba Religion, cultivated and practised his very own religion in Shiluo Cave on the Dongshan Mountain. That he came to this place was closely connected with the ancient Tea Caravan Route. According to tradition, on his way back home after having studied in Tibet, Dingba Shiluo was attracted by the marvellous spectacle of the Baishui Terrace and decided to build a temple there, from where he established the polytheistic Dongba Religion and the pictographic Dongba Scripture.

Translated by Xiong Zhenru

. Chain bridge in Shigu Town at the first bend on the Yangtse
iver (by Peng Zhen Ge)
. Today, the Tiger Leaping Gorge has become a famous
cenic spot for tourists (by Chen Xiaowei).

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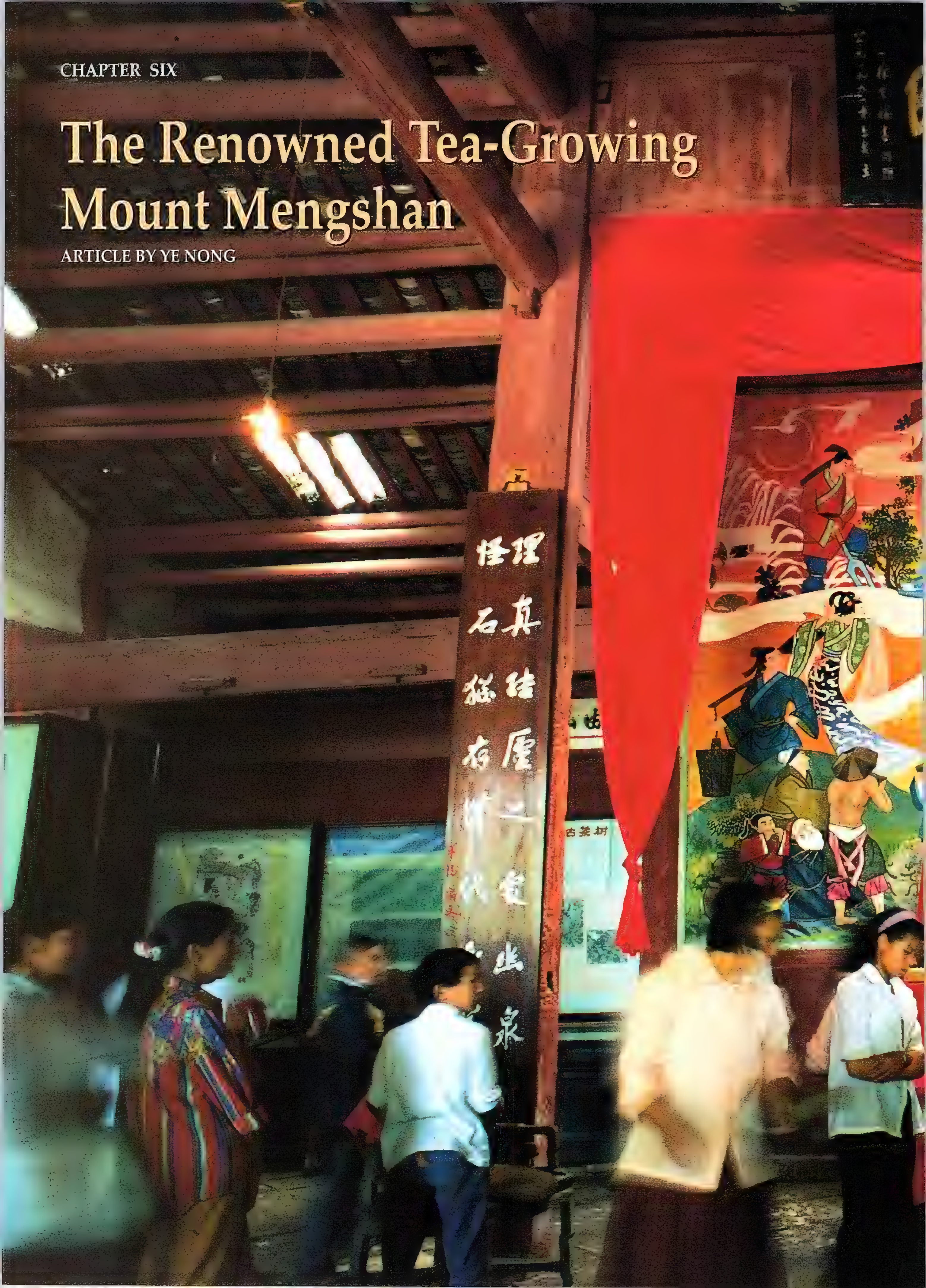
CHAPTER SIX

The Renowned Tea-Growing Mount Mengshan

ARTICLE BY YE NONG



A statue of Great Master Sweet Dew enshrined on the top of Mount Mengshan. It is said that the Great Master planted a tea shrub more than 2,000 years ago (by Chen Jin).

As a matter of fact, Sichuan Province traditionally known as "the Land of Abundance" also has a tea production and selling base: the renowned Mount Mengshan.

According to some specialists, though Yunnan, Guizhou and Sichuan provinces in Southwest China are all the world's birthplaces of tea trees, people who were the first to drink tea, cultivate tea shrubs and engage in the tea trade were from Sichuan Province.

Sichuan's Network of Tea Caravan Trails

As proved by historians, as early as in the Qin and Han period tea-drinking and tea commodity production already existed. During the Wei and Jin periods tea cultivation and tea-drinking gradually spread to Southeast China and then in the Tang period, to the whole of China.

It was after the Tang Dynasty (618-907) that Sichuan's tea was sent to the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, in a more northwesterly direction. Besides Tibet, Sichuan's tea leaves were supplied to Qinghai, Xinjiang and Gansu as well as Garzê and Aba Tibetan communities in Sichuan itself.

So for centuries tea-carrying caravans travelled along breathtaking perilous paths across mountains and plateaus resulting in a network of tea caravan roads which linked Sichuan and Tibet.

Mount Mengshan's Tribute Tea

In early spring we traversed several tea caravan roads trod by Han and Tibetan ancestors, making surveys and interviews within Sichuan Province.

Setting off from Chengdu which boasts the greatest consumption of tea leaves and the greatest number of teahouses, we went straight to Mount Mengding — the Mecca of tea.

Mount Mengding, also known as Mount Mengshan, is located in Mingshan County, over 140 kilometres away from Chengdu. At an altitude of 1,456 metres above sea level it is not very high, nor precipitous. Fertile soil and abundant rainfall, as Mingshan County is commonly known for having a leaky sky, plus the clouds and fogs that shroud the mountaintop the year round have provided favourable climatic conditions for producing good tea.

Back in the Tang Dynasty, we learned, the emperor heard about the famed tea and issued a dicree to list it as an annual tribute.

Every spring in the olden times when tea shrubs began putting out their tender sprouts, the magistrate of Mingshan County would choose an auspicious day, take a bath and put on clean clothes, then lead his entourage and monks from various monasteries to worship the seven "immortal tea trees" on the mountaintop. Only after burning incense and kowtowing could tea growers set to pick the first batch of spring tea of the year.

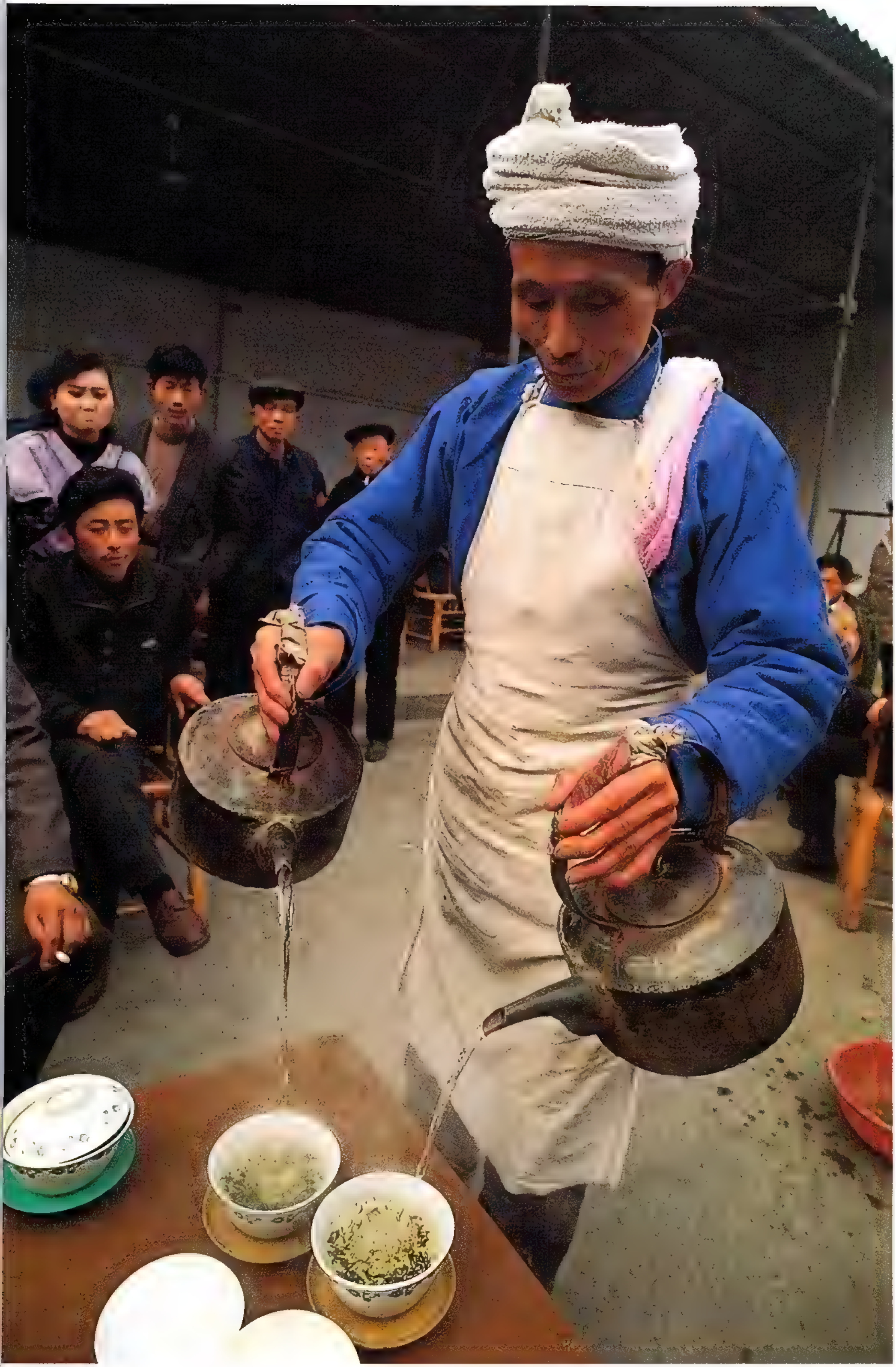
The first 360 tea leaves picked were handed to the tea-making monks. They sat around the cauldron chanting scriptures with closed eyes till the tribute tea was baked. Then they respectfully put the tea into a silver box and immediately despatched special messengers on horseback to send it to the capital. But even His Majesty dared not take the 360 tea leaves for himself. They were sacrifices for Heaven and ancestors. Only the tea baked from tender leaves picked after the sacred 360, weighing about 10 kilogrammes a year and put in 18 tin bottles were given as tribute tea for the emperor to drink.

Mount Mengding — Once the Tribute Tea Garden

Ascending the so-called heavenly ladder and going through thick groves of tea bushes we went up to the mountaintop step by step. On the open grounds on the slopes many people, men and women, stood waving their hands and shaking their legs, completely immersed in breathing exercises. These devotees came to Mount Mengding to collect the divine air which gave birth to deity tea, so they believed, to attain good health and longevity.

On the mountain stands the Tiangai Temple in which a coloured clay sculpture of Great Master Gan Lu (Sweet Dew) is enshrined. Great master Sweet Dew was the founder of tea cultivation at Mount Mengding.

Legend has it that the great master was surnamed Wu, and his religious name Li Zhen. In a certain year during the Western Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 24) Wu came to Mount Mengding. After surveying the topography, soil and climate, favourable for tea cultivation, he planted tea shrubs seeds on the five peaks. From



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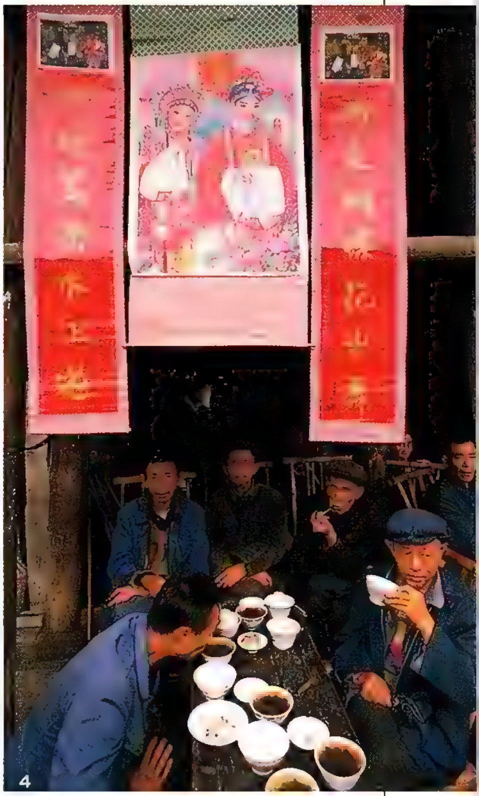

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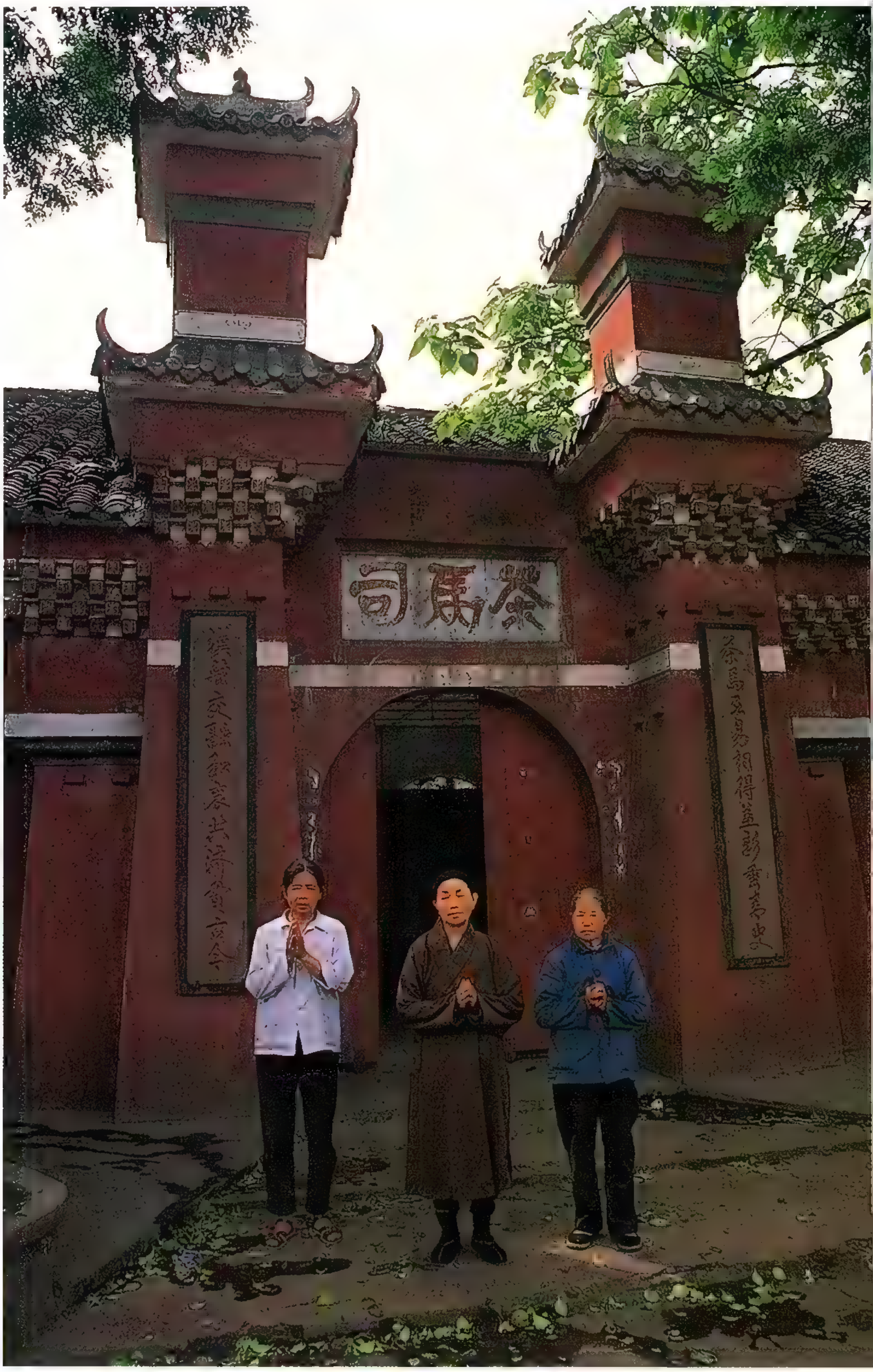
. The Mingfengyuan Tea Shop of Chengdu sells famous teas of Sichuan Province and from ther parts of China (by Lai Wu).

. The Hehuachi Tea Market of Chengdu (by Lai Wu)

. A veteran worker demonstrates to visitors his lifetime skill of tea-making (by Chen Jin).

. A time-honoured teahouse on an old street of Chengdu (by Chen Jin)



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1. Big bowls of tea are offered free to passers-by at Moun Mengding (by Chen Jin).
2. The Tea Caravan Department on Mount Mengshan wa built during the Song Dynasty. It was China's firs government institution in charge of trading tea for horse (by Peng Zhen Ge).
3. Workers of the Mengshan Tea Farm collecting spring te sprouts (by Peng Zhen Ge).
4. Legend has it that drinking tea brewed with water fro the Sweet Dew Well on top of Mount Mengding can cu all kinds of illnesses (by Chen Jin).
5. The Sichuan-Tibet Highway passes by the tea-growi mountain (by Lai Wu).

then on Mount Mengding has been otherwise known as the Mountain of Tea.

Though in many parts of southern China monks are closely related to tea, the tribute tea garden of Mount Mengding demonstrates this phenomenon to the extreme. Monks take charge of every stage. There are tea-picking monks, weeding monks, tea-making monks and tea-watching monks. Among the monasteries there is also a division of labour. The Jingju (Quiet Residence) Nunnery is in charge of tea-picking, the Thousand Buddha Monastery is responsible for attending to the tea garden, the Great Buddha Monastery takes charge of tea-making, while the Tiangai Temple is "a commission" for sampling and judging tea.

The 91-Year-Old Tea Grower

We met an old tea grower named Pan Shaojun on a slope of Mount Mengding. In spite of his age he still worked at his own tea garden.

Growing tea on the mountain for 80 years, Mr. Pan, now 91 years old, used to scale mountain after mountain and sell in Kangding the tea leaves grown and processed by himself. The old tea grower said humorously: "In my youth when I worked in the tea fields people called me Tea Grower Brother Pan. When I carried tea bags on my way to Kangding, I was called Packer Pan. I was born and bred here, and have been working for all my life on this mountain and have spent half of my life trekking mountain paths in order to make a living. I haven't had time to see the world. If you want to ask me what I like most, I'll tell you, but don't laugh at me," Mr. Pan paused. "It's the glossy dark green of tea sprouts in spring."

Mr. Pan has a son and several grandsons and great-grandsons. However, he dislikes being idle and often does what he can in the tea garden.

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Ancient "Tea Caravan Department" Now Run by Nuns

In a place not far from a highway between Qionglai and Mingshan there stands an ancient building. It looks neither like a monastery nor like a Taoist temple. Yet there are pilgrims to this site. Several nuns bob in or out of the building as if they are the permanent occupants.

When drawing near to read the characters inscribed on the door lintel, we found that it was the "Tea Caravan Department" — a tea administrative institution set up by the government in ancient times. In modern Chinese terms it would be called the tea trade administrative bureau.

Way back in the Song Dynasty (907-1279), the imperial court of Han nationality got hold of the production and sale of tea and practised a system of tea monopoly. In other words, the government controlled tea and used it to exchange for good horses with the Tibetans, Mongolians and other minorities.

The imperial court set up tea departments in Chengdu and Mingshan one after the other to supervise tea growers and merchants. Private tea trade was forbidden. All tea was to be sold to the government. During the Ming Dynasty (1386-1644) more strict laws were introduced to forbid tea trading. A son-in-law of the founding emperor, Zhu Yuanzhang was ruthlessly sentenced to capital punishment on account of engaging in private tea trading. The Ming imperial court also stipulated prohibition of tea shrub seeds and saplings to be taken over the Erlang Mountain to the Tibet region, for fear of Tibetans stopping the purchase of tea once they could grow tea themselves.

Today tea is traded freely. The building of "Tea Caravan Department" has become a relic of ancient times. Nobody knows exactly when Buddhist followers first quietly entered the building, turning the awesome *yamen* (a government office in feudal China) into a philanthropic Buddhist shrine.

Planting Tea Shrubs Beyond the Erlang Mountain

After descending from Mount Mengding we drove southwest to the city of Ya'an.

Since ancient times Ya'an has been a centre for growing, making, transporting and selling Sichuan's border tea and hence is an important place along the Tea Caravan Route. With an annual precipitation of about 1,800 millimetres Ya'an is also traditionally known as "the rainfall city". Legend has it that its annual rainfall is exactly the volume of rainfall after Goddess Nüwa mended the sky. Therefore the sculpture of Goddess Nüwa mending the sky has become a symbol of the city.

In Ya'an we heard the story about the man named Zhao Yongfu who planted tea shrubs beyond the Erlang Mountain. Forty years ago, carrying tea seedlings and traversing the rugged tea caravan roads, he scaled the permanently snow-capped Erlang Mountain and found a plot of thick fertile soil in Luding. There he planted the first historic tea shrub in the area. To his delight it survived. Thereafter, more tea shrubs were planted and soon they covered a whole mountain slope. The news drew reporters from all parts of the country to his tea plantation, and thus overnight an ordinary tea grower became a star of Sichuan Province's media. During the Ming and Qing dynasties, however, Zhao's act would have been indicted a heinous crime against the law of imperial court.

Zhao Yongfu proved that natural conditions exist in the area of Kangding for growing tea bushes. At that time someone else also attempted to plant tea bushes further westward to the Tibet-Qinghai Plateau, but failed. Today, Luding remains the "borderline" of tea cultivation on the southern route.

During our stay in Ya'an we braved drizzles to find Mr. Zhao, a pioneer who pushed tea cultivation westward, but in vain.

Machines Replace Manual Labour

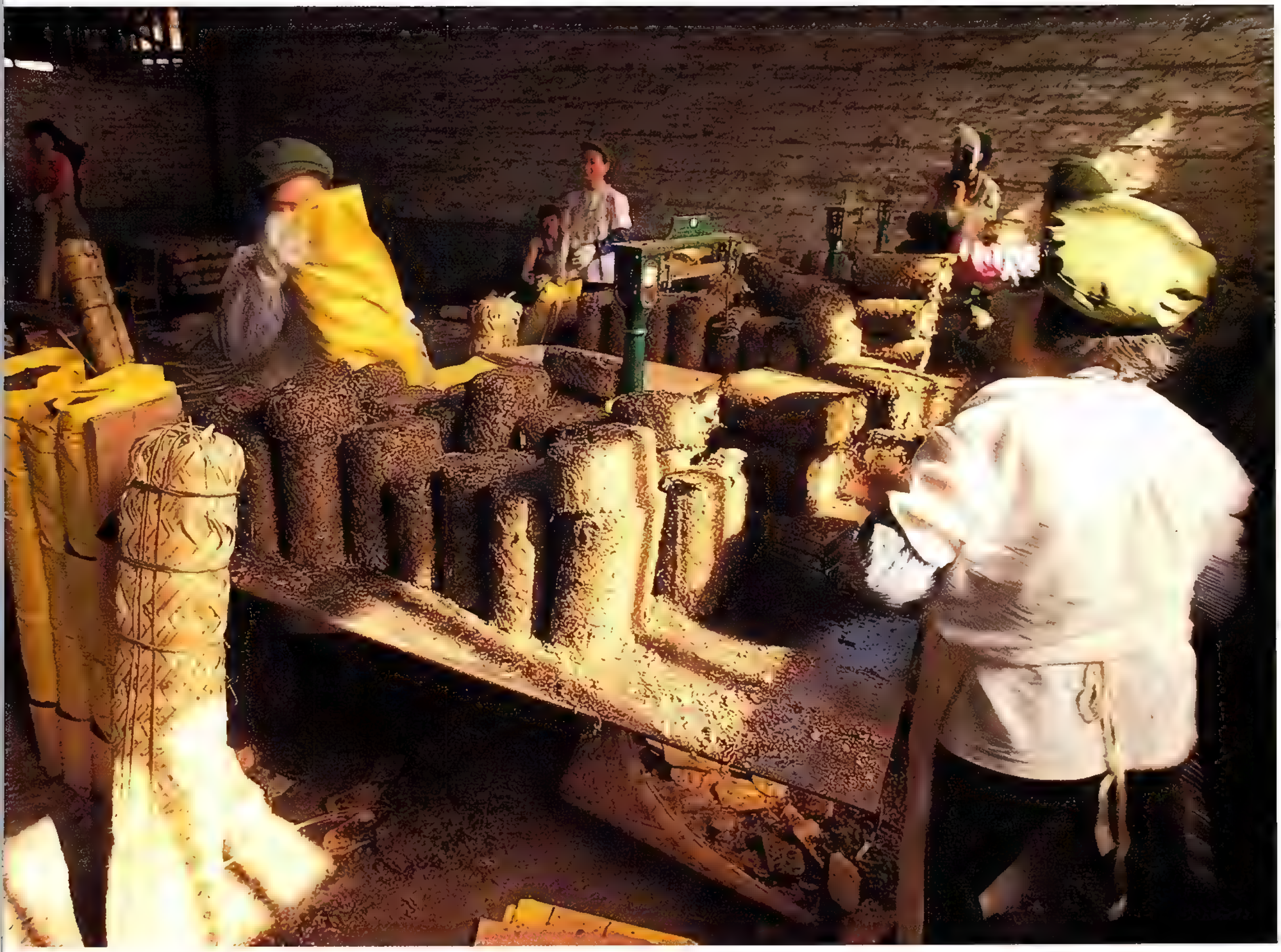
We went to the brick tea-making workshop of the Ya'an Tea Plant. The head of the workshop shouted to someone deep in the hot and noisy workshop, "Master Shen." Shortly, a lean man walked up to us: Master Shen, one of the few veteran tea makers of Ya'an. His wrinkled face betrayed his age of over 60.

Though already retired, Master Shen is re-employed to train apprentices. Veterans like him are now numbered. Master Shen entered the plant as an apprentice at the age of 12. Up to now he has trained countless numbers of apprentices. Pointing at the workers he told us that labour intensity of the brick tea workshop is the most onerous. Work was even harder in the past. Take the process of rolling tea for instance. Hot steamed fresh tea leaves were put into gunnysacks which were placed on reclining wooden rubbing boards. Two workers rolled the steam-hot gunnysacks up and down three times with their feet. On their first day, young workers would invariably get blisters on their bare feet. As days went by the blisters dried and gradually became thick calluses. They no longer felt painful.... Today fortunately, this arduous process is done by machine.

Before we said good-bye, Master Shen proudly told me that the king of Bhutan and Panchen Lama of Tibet had also been visitors to the Ya'an Tea Plant.

Translated by Anne Yan

. Many pilgrims worship at the Stone Buddha Monastery of Yingjing County (Peng Zhen Ge).
. The earthen cooking pot is a unique product of Yingjing (by Lai Wu).
. Compressed tea sold to Gansu, Qinghai and Tibet must be packed with bamboo strips to withstand the tress and strain of a long journey (by Lai Wu).
. Drinking tea on the street is a traditional custom in Shangli Town along the ancient Tea Caravan Route y Chen Jin).
. "Jinjian" or "Golden Tip" produced by Yingjing Tea Plant is a famous brand of border tea (by Lai Wu).



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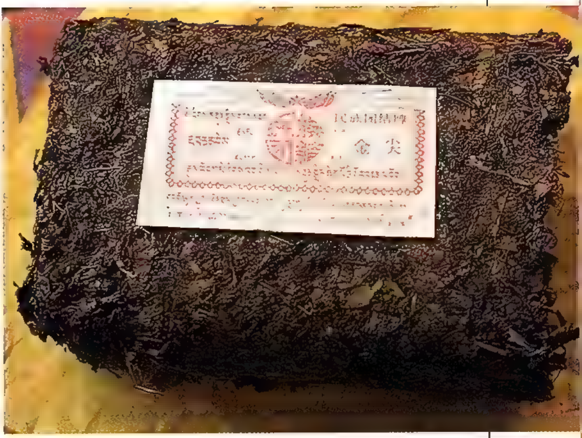

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CHAPTER SEVEN

Border Tea and Horses Meet in Kangding

ARTICLE BY YE NONG

Today, the Sichuan-Tibet Highway passes Erlang Mountain, which was once a natural barrier on the ancient Tea Caravan Route. This section, however, is still a perilous ride (by Ye Nong).

From Ya'an, an important place of growing and selling tea, we took the ancient road t Tibet, a road horse caravans and tea carriers had used in the old days. The road branche into two, one via Tianquan crossing the Erlang Mountain and passing Luding to Kangdin and the other south-bound to Yingjing crossing the Niba Mountain and Feiyue Ridge and vi Luding to Kangding. We took the Tianquan route first.

Triangular Pancakes, Sweat Wiper and T-Shaped Sticks

Because of the transportation of border tea, the ancient Tianquan county town is we known to Tibetan people. Viewing down from Meizi Ridge outside, the town seems no di ferent from any new city — multi-storey buildings were be ing constructed everywhere. Walking in town, however, w saw many well preserved ancient streets. For instance, th one by the city wall running in the direction of the Erlan Mountain, an old border tea market lined with old houses

1

It was early in the morning. We searched along the stree in town for restaurants to have breakfast. On a table laid a the doorway of a restaurant, we saw a pile of delicious an thick, triangular pancakes baked golden. They smelt goo and tasted crispy. Upon inquiry, we learnt the story behin the unique pancake. It had been invented a long time ag for tea carriers to take along for trips crossing the moun tains. The triangular shape made it easy to be tucke around the carriers' waist belt. With a heavy load of te packs on their backs and triangular pancakes around the waist, carriers could have a bite whenever they wante without stopping to eat.

T-shaped sticks were indispensable for the carriers o their journey. When they stop for a break, they propped u the load on their backs with the stick. When they scaled mount they used the stick for support.

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But the most unique item is the sweat-wiper that the carriers used, made mostly of bam boo and some from iron. Designed for the face, it is in the shape of a toothless comb with on side curved inward. When trudging along the rugged mountain road with the weight o their backs, carriers often had the problem of sweat running into their eyes. With the comb however, the carriers could dry up their face with a single sweep. What an invention.

Highway on the Erlang Mountain — Evolved from the Ancient Tea Caravan Route

The fairly well-known Erlang Mountain lies between Tianquan and Luding counties, pre senting a three-day journey for tea carriers from Tianquan crossing over Erlang Mountain t Lengqi of Luding County. Today the 318 State Highway spirals up the mountain and peopl no longer have to walk.

While driving along we frequently made short excursions off the highway into woods i the hope to find the ancient road. All we saw were wild animals and birds and rotten leave underfoot.

Yet, frequent landslides and the perilous height made the ride far from being an eas Sunday afternoon excursion, particularly in winter when the highway conveys one-wa traffic for a whole day, then the opposite direction the next. Each vehicle must be equippe with non-skid tyre chains. A section of a dozen or so kilometres long the highway is foreve snowy and icy. Vehicles simply slide along icy ruts and the slightest negligence would resu in tragedy, in addition to the horrible landslides.

Two days after our arrival in Luding, we heard a vehicle had been buried in a landslide – nine lives were lost. The "modern tea caravan route" is therefore not without its dangers.

Jimi Horses in Hanyuan

When the hostile winter was eventually over, we resumed our trip in the warm breeze c spring. This time, we took the south-bound road from Yingjing, crossing the Daxiang Ridg and via Hanyuan to Luding. As Yingjing had border tea processing mills, there was natu rally a tea caravan road to Kangding.

Horse caravans and tea carriers crossed the Daxiang Ridge to start their trips. Every yea as soon as October is over, the ridge is snowcapped until the next May.

After we left the ridge behind, on the mountain path we saw some horses smaller than th usual size: they were Jimi horses, a species documented in history books. Rulers of pas

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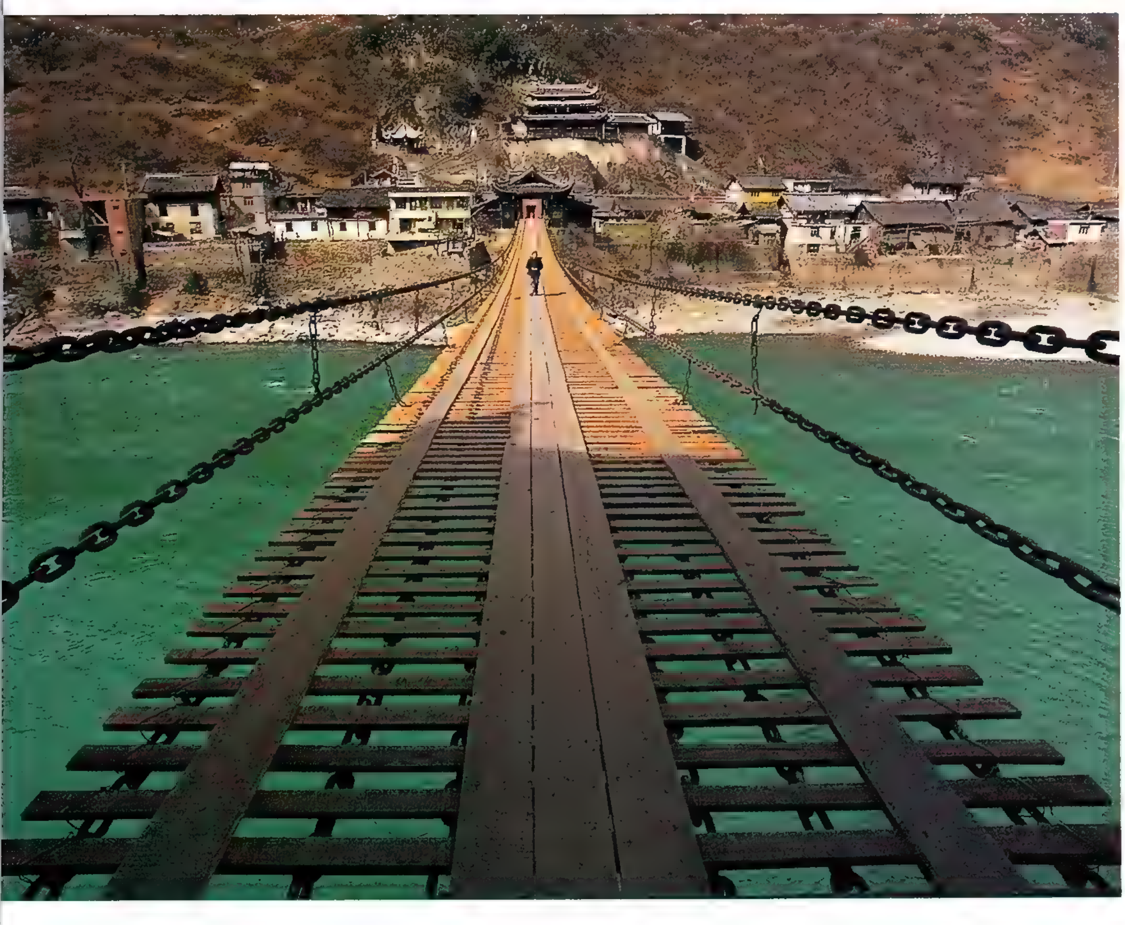

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1. A hotel by the Fengyipu Bridge in Yingjing — a popular haunt for horse caravanners and tea carriers to drink tea or stay overnight (by Lai Wu).
2. Attire of Sichuan tea carriers (by Lai Wu)
3. A stone bridge on the road of Yingjing (by Chen Jin)
4. The Luding Bridge over the turbulent Dadu River makes transportation easier on the Tea Caravan Route in western Sichuan (by Lai Wu).

1. Dried red beancurd found at Jiuxiang Town, the food for tea carriers in the old days (by Chen Jin).

2. The Temple of Lord Guan, a place frequented by tea carriers for protection (by Chen Jin)

3. The Jimi horse described as being "smaller than the standard horse" in history books (by Lai Wu)

4. The T-shaped stick, nicknamed his "step-son", had helped this old man to journey across mountains with tea bags to Kangding in his youth (by Zhang Jinneng).

5. Potholes left on the road by the tea carriers' T-shaped sticks from the past (by Chen Jin)

1

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ynasties had traded border tea for two kinds of horses, battlefield horses from Qinghai-ibet Plateau and the Hexi Corridor in Gansu, and Jimi horses from the areas where minori-es lived in Yunnan, Guizhou and Sichuan. Although not good for battles, Jimi horses are mble, tough and ideal for use in mountains.

A Section of Ancient Road Preserved

Luding is between Hanyuan and Kangding. Between Hanyuan and Luding there are two ɔads, one old, the other new. The old road is 35 kilometres long against the new road of over)0 kilometres. The road narrows to a path when winding over the 4,000- me-e-high ridge, and close to the peak it is covered in snow and very narrow. ɔcal villagers would rather walk along the old road crossing the mountains ıan take a bus along the new road. The reason is simple: the old road takes st seven or eight hours, whereas taking a bus on the highway you would ıve to change several times on a journey which lasts one or two days, not to ıention buying tickets! Thanks to their calculation we were able to experience portion of the sparsely flagged ancient road.

We found the old road from Yidong of Hanyuan to Hualinping of Luding ıarked by potholes left from T-shaped sticks and horse hooves over many ɛnerations. While we were making our way along we heard bells of horses ıd songs in the distance. A moment later, a mixed team of horse caravan and ıck carriers were seen coming up around a slope. The road still had busy affic!

Deep inside the mountains, the town of Yidong had managed to preserve s ancient look: the uneven flagged street lined up on either side by old houses arkened from cooking smoke.

On hearing the purpose of our visit, an old man called Shi Guofan sprang to is feet from a chess game and volunteered to be our guide. He was 69, and ad carried tea packs over Feiyue Ridge many times to Kangding when he as young. He gave us details on the route from Yidong to Luding, Tianquan, anyuan, Ya'an and Mingshan, distances and places for food and accommo-ation.

We met another old man named Dong Zuyuan in Hualinping Town west the Feiyue Ridge. He also volunteered to be our guide. In his youth, he said, is family had been better off and had several businesses in town. He had ɔne to the Tibetan area in Kangding a couple of times, but unlike others, ırried just one or two tea bags on each trip. It had been for fun rather than ıoney.

4

Luding Bridge and Dajianlu

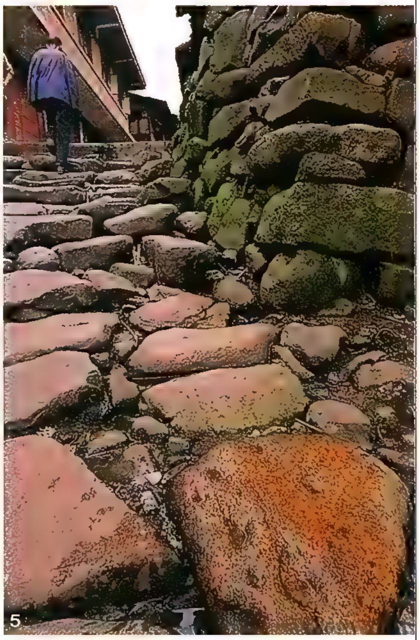
By the east end of the Luding Bridge over the Dadu River is a stone tablet on which the ing emperor Kangxi's calligraphy was inscribed, "Construction of the Bridge at Royal dict". This verified the 290-year-old history of this famous bridge.

The bridge had long boards on 13 very thick iron chains, each over 100 metres long and 5 tons in weight. The bridge, the only passage way, connected the ancient route from ichuan to Tibet. After it was built, people no longer needed to risk their lives to cross the ırbulent river by boat.

The bridge had tremendously helped business to boom in Luding County. East of the ridge there used to be a place for trading fur, herbal medicine and musk. Though smaller ıan those in Kangding, this market had attracted many Tibetan peddlers with a small apital.

Kangding was the commercial city where border tea from Sichuan, horses and other roducts from Tibet met. Local Han people and horse caravaners named Kangding Dajianlu" or arrow making stove, the Han phonetic equivalent of Kangding's original Ti-etan name "Dazezhu", which meant a place where two rivers converge. On a high point utside the city we saw two branches of the Dadu River meet, like a symbol of the meeting of vest-bound border tea and east-bound horses.

While in Kangding we spent half a day gathering historical information about the city. It ıad been wild territory by the Duozhe River at the foot of the Duozhe Mountain before the ong Dynasty, we learnt. After the western military expedition by the Emperor Shizu of the 'uan Dynasty, many businessmen from Shaanxi came to Xikang Tibetan area to enter the ɔrder tea business and they soon outnumbered the original Sichuan businessmen. Since the ling Dynasty, the number of Shaanxi businessmen grew even faster and they built a haanxi street in Kangding specializing in border tea business. The situation began to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change during the Qing Dynasty when Tibetan businessmen came to challenge the dom nance by Shaanxi businessmen. Tibetan businessmen established 48 “guozhuang” hotels cater for Tibetan businessmen, providing food and board as well as a place to discuss trad By then, Kangding had developed into a big commercial city in China’s border areas, ar became the second largest city east of Lhasa.

With so many businessmen of different nationalities, there was a language problem. As result a very popular book was published for conversational language in Chinese and T betan.

Meanwhile, Han and Tibetan customs began to mix. Han people joined the excitement Tibetan New Year, and Tibetan people pasted couplets — with Tibetan characters of cour — and set off fireworks on the Spring Festival.

The Only “Guozhuang” Owner Still Alive

1

Guided by a person from Chengguan Town governmer we visited Bao Wenguang, the only “guozhuang” own still alive. His “guozhuang”, named Wang Cheng Xian, w the only one among the 48 hotels not to be demolished b cause at the time, it had been used as a house of detentic and hence remained intact.

Aged 67, Bao was serving as the vice-chairman of tl county’s Political Consultative Conference. He gave us a account of life from over 30 years ago, when he was tl owner of a guozhuang business.

Not only good at managing hotel business, he said, guozhuang owner was also a broker of horses and tea b tween Han and Tibetan businessmen. The main income fc him was the commission money from each deal made, us ally four per cent of the business volume. He gave fre lodging and boarding to Tibetan businessmen, for his ber efit was related to theirs.

Each guozhuang, said Bao, had regular customers, ar his were mostly the Tulkus and managers from the mona teries in Garzê, Qamdo and Litang. Those monasteries accounted for much of tl horse and tea business.

2

Sewing Leather Tea Bags All His Life

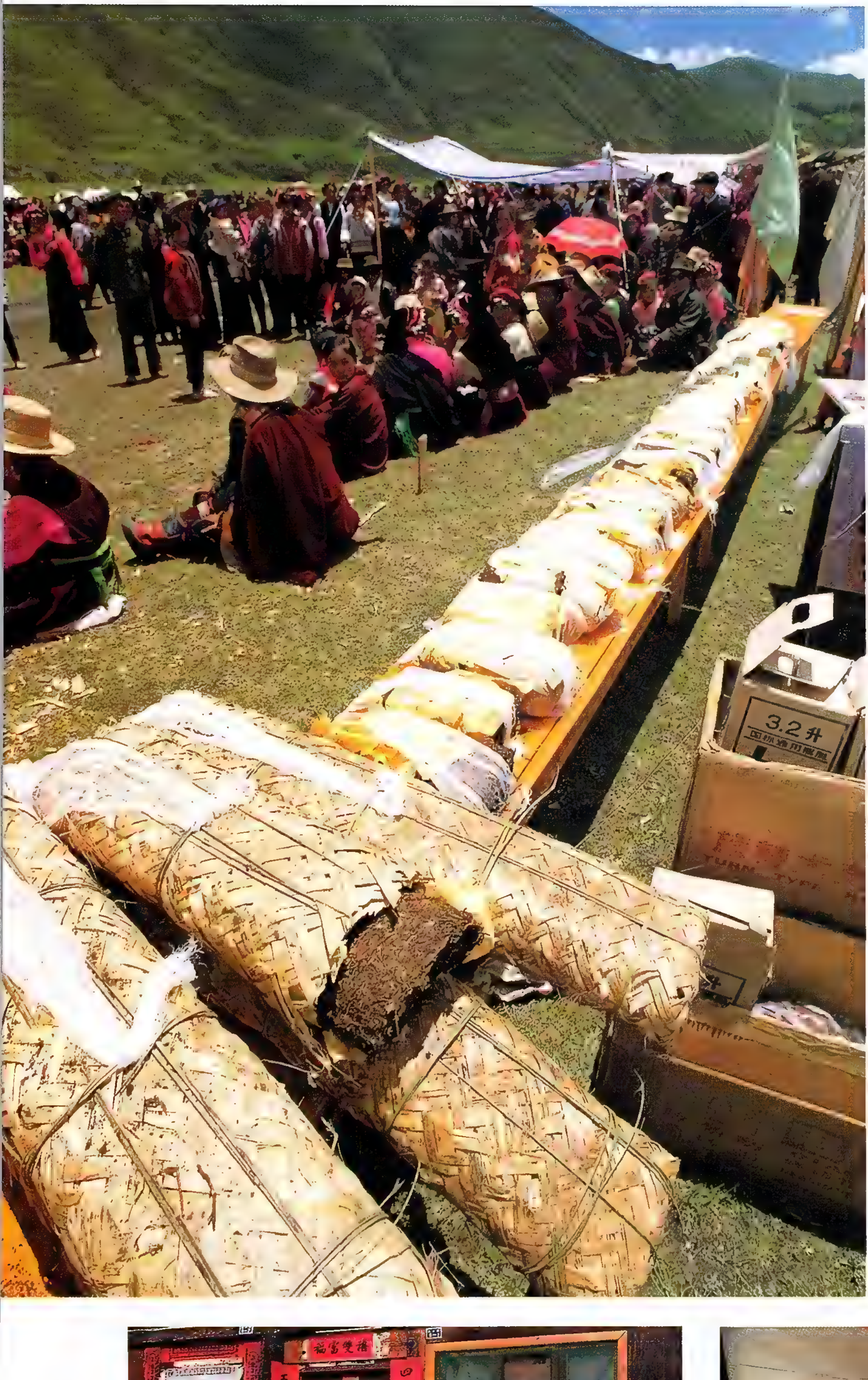
We met an old man surnamed Gao in Kangding. Aged 87, he had made te bags all through his life and everybody respected and knew him as “Uncle Gao

His ancestors came from Zitong County, northern Sichuan. When he was ver young he began to sew leather tea bags for a guozhuang. It was a long way fc border tea to be transported from Kangding to Tibet and Qinghai, so the wrap ping had to be very strong. Brick tea shipped in from Ya’an was wrapped wit only thin bamboo slips, and thus had to be further protected by a leather bag ove the bamboo wrapper for the rest of the journey. Thus the profession of sewin leather tea bags came into being.

All sewing workers had deformed hands: their palms were full of scars left b thick needles, and the skin and flesh of their fingers were torn open even to th bone by pulling the thread. A capable sewer could sew seven or eight yak hide and each was able to hold two or three bamboo containers. The leather bags wit its contents must be sunned for a few days before they were ready for transportation. Usu ally a caravan of hundreds of yaks had to wait with patience in Kangding because prepara tion for tea shipping took much longer than the time a deal was made.

Nowadays, leather tea bags are made by machines and the materials used have changec Nevertheless, Uncle Gao and his skill, together with the deeds of his fellow workers will b remembered. So will the ancient Tea Caravan Route, which is gradually receding int history.

Translated by Li Guoqing



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1. *Wang Cheng Xian, the only extant guozhuang of the original 48 guozhuang hotels (by Ye Nong)*
2. *A Tibetan horse caravan on its way to Sichuan (by Ou Yansheng)*
3. *Border tea was often the award given to the winners in the Kangding horse-racing competition (by Lai Wu).*
4. *Tibetan and Han people have lived together harmoniously for many years. Even their customs have mixed to some extent (by Zhang Jinneng).*
5. *Tibetan style teahouse in Kangding (by Lai Wu)*

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五谷豐登滿庭喜
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CHAPTER EIGHT

The Yunnan, Sichuan and Tibet Snow Triangle

A horse caravan from Zogang to Dongba Snow Mountain (by Yang Kelin)

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Ya'an of Sichuan is a tea production area, but the distributing centre of tea is in Kangding. We set off from Kangding to travel estward, passing Xinduqiao, Yajiang and Taziba, and arrived at itang. Then we turned to the southwest, taking the trading route of ichuan tea into Yunnan.

Litang, Where the Yunnan-Sichuan and Sichuan-Tibet Highways Cross

Litang is one of the highest county towns in the world. When we rrived at Sandui Village at noon, we were a bit nervous because some- ody had warned us that the people here were doughty and tough. The rey-bricked houses in the village looked very imposing.

Litang, a snowy area on the plateau, is more than 4,000 metres above ea level. The Tibetan county town only has two small streets, one old nd the other new. The Tibetan men and women traders in the streets ll looked strong and handsome. We admired the brave and husky angba men but we were also slightly alarmed by the sight of their big ardrops. Our worries, however, soon disappeared when the Kangba en started to smile at us. They even came over to ask us to take photos r them.

We lodged in the village for the night. The next morning we went to itang Monastery to take pictures. This is the largest monastery of elugpa (Yellow Sect) which combines political and strong economic ower with religion. In the past, the monastery conducted business in ndia, Tibet, Lijiang, Kunming, Qinghai, Gansu and even had a busi- ess office in Shanghai. The monastery organized many varieties of oods for sale to the outside, such as fur, Chinese caterpillar fungus *ordyceps sinensis*), bulb of fritillary (*Fritillaria thunbergii*), gold, and nported or transferred goods like cloth, cigarettes, guns and ammuni- on, and opium.

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Old Traces Found on the Ancient Route

We continued our trip to the southwest from Litang, passing agxoi and reached Xiangcheng. In the setting sun, the town looked agnificent. The solid residential houses were all built with big locks of stones, but their windows tended to be very small, probably r the purpose of defence in addition to keeping warm. We were ld that in the old days, horse drivers were afraid of the bandits ere.

Xiangcheng's geographic location provides a unique strategic po- ition, which perhaps has also nurtured the firm character of the iangcheng people. Xiangcheng controls Zhongdian in the south, de- ends the Yunnan-Tibet ancient route in the west, and blocks the ichuan-Tibet retreat route from Batang to Dajianlu. Since ancient mes Xiangcheng had been contested by all strategists. In his south- rn expedition, Kublai Khan of the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368) brought great number of Subi people of Mongolian origin here to settle down Xiangcheng. Ruins of ancient castles can still be found here. The iangcheng people identity themselves as the descendants of Tibetan, axi and Subi people, and they are good at horsemanship and ar- hery.

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Tibetan Assimilation of Qing Soldier Descendants

From Xiangcheng to Dêrong, we had to cross the Big and Small now Mountains. It was November. The snow mountains were envel- ped in clouds and mists with wind howling around, and the vast ex- anse of primitive forests here seemed to have been untouched by man. virgin land that made us feel the tranquil pureness and mystery of he snow mountains.

At night, we lodged at Shangqiaotou Village south of Dêrong, oppo- ite to Dêqên across a river. In the past, most of the men in the village ade their living from horse transportation. Often they left home for ong periods, and some even died outside. Tea was the main commod- ty transported.

1. Tibetan resident houses in southwestern Sichuan (by Ye Nong)
2. Tea is an indispensable dowry gift according to Tibetan customs (by Wang Dajun).
3. A mysterious lamasery in Xiangcheng (by Li Yaobo)
4. Tibetan lamas beat buttered tea everyday, a compulsory lesson for them (by Wang Dajun).

Shangqiaotou is a small charming village covered with thick trees and where the Gangqu River passe through the village, murmuring quietly: a far cry from its history as a piece of land contested by armies. As all th villagers wore Tibetan robes, we took for granted that it was a Tibetan village. Later we learned from chattin with the locals that most of the villagers were Hans who were the descendants of the Qing soldiers statione there for river harnessment. Among the 18 families, only one was Tibetan. The Hans, however, lived very muc like the Tibetans. They wore Tibetan robes, drank buttered tea, made wooden bowls and built their houses i Tibetan style like flat-top fortresses. Thirteen young men in the village had married Tibetan girls. The Han settled here had assimilated themselves with the Tibetans over the centuries.

We left Shangqiaotou Village and came to Nixi Township of Zhongdian where the Tea Caravan Route int Sichuan and Tibet passes. This township is very famous for its handicraft, and we saw every household makin wooden bowls, one of the daily necessities of the Tibetans. Merchants exchanged the bowls with salt fron Yanjing or tea from southern Yunnan. There is always a great demand for the wooden bowls.

Tea and Horse Party on Zhongdian Grassland

The vast grassland extended to link the magnificent mountains in the distance.

We were told that the grassland in May or June was the most beautiful. On the mountain slopes along th highway, azaleas were in full bloom among a host of other flowers weaving colour through the whole grasslanc After a long cold winter, the herdsmen put on new clothes, bringing with them their families to set tents on th slopes where they would drink, dance and revel for three days. Horse caravans would also come from other parts to join the herdsmen and take pai in the annual horse race. The winner in the horse race would be rewarded woven woollen horse cover. It was said that some riders would feed thei horses with tea to stimulate the horses to run faster. Maybe this is one of th reasons why tea and horses cannot be separated in the Tibetan regions. Thi festive occasion is called a Tea Party. Tea is very much treasured by th Tibetans, and they use tea in every occasion such as marriage, worshippin Buddha, social activities and dating. The Tea Party has become a collectiv social activity popular in the Greater and Lesser Zhongdian.

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1. *On the way from Dêqên to Yanjing, a typical Tibetan Plateau scene at high attitude (by Yang Kelin)*
2. *A Tibetan woman in Zhongdian is beating buttered tea for the Dragon Boat Festival (by Ou Yansheng).*
3. *Meili Snow Mountain in the setting sun (by Xu Jinyan)*
4. *Every time when a grand festival is due, Guihua Monastery is packed with people (by Luo Jinhui).*

Buttered Tea and the History of Tea-Drinking

It would be a pity if you do not drink buttered tea when you are i Zhongdian. In the evening of our arrival at Zhongdian County, we wer invited to a Tibetan friend's home to drink buttered tea.

A charcoal stove was burning in the sitting room, and the warmth gav us a homely atmosphere. The hostess broke a piece of tea brick into an iro pot. Then she took out a wooden cylinder about the thickness of a bow and put some salt, butter and spices inside. The tea, filtered of leaves, wa then poured into the cylinder. A stick with a piston at one end was inserte into the cylinder. After beating for a while, the buttered tea was ready t serve. The aroma of the tea immediately filled the house. Drinking buttere tea involves a ritual or custom of dipping the third finger from your thum in the cup and flicking drops of the tea three times to pay respect to th heavenly god, earth god and dragon god before drinking the tea.

Buttered tea is de rigueur in the Tibetan region. After entering the Tibetan region, we had buttered tea everywhere we were invited. It is believed that buttered tea not only helps resist cold and damp but also build up your immunity system.

The written history of tea-drinking in Tibet can be traced back to 1,50 years ago, when the ancient Tibetan regime was very strong and its troop fought the Tang army at the border and captured many spoils includin tea. At first they did not know how to use the tea. Only after Princess We Cheng married to Songtsan Gambo (617-650), the Tibetan king, was tea drinking brought into Tibet. Tea helped digestion and was a valuabl source of vitamins since the Tibetan diet was mainly meat. Tea therefor became popular all over Tibet. From then on, tea sold to Tibet was callec Border Tea or Tibetan Tea which was made into compressed tea bricks, custom continued to the present.

Since tea became important, rulers of successive dynasties had control over tea trade to border regions, and this became a lucrative policy for border economy. In the Song Dynasty (960-1279), large quantities of horse were needed because of constant wars. Border General Wang Shao saw Tibetans driving horses to the border town to exchange for tea, so he wrote t the emperor suggesting the establishment of tea markets for exchangin horses. Therefore, a special department called Tea and Horse Departmen was set up in charge of the trade of tea and horses at the border.

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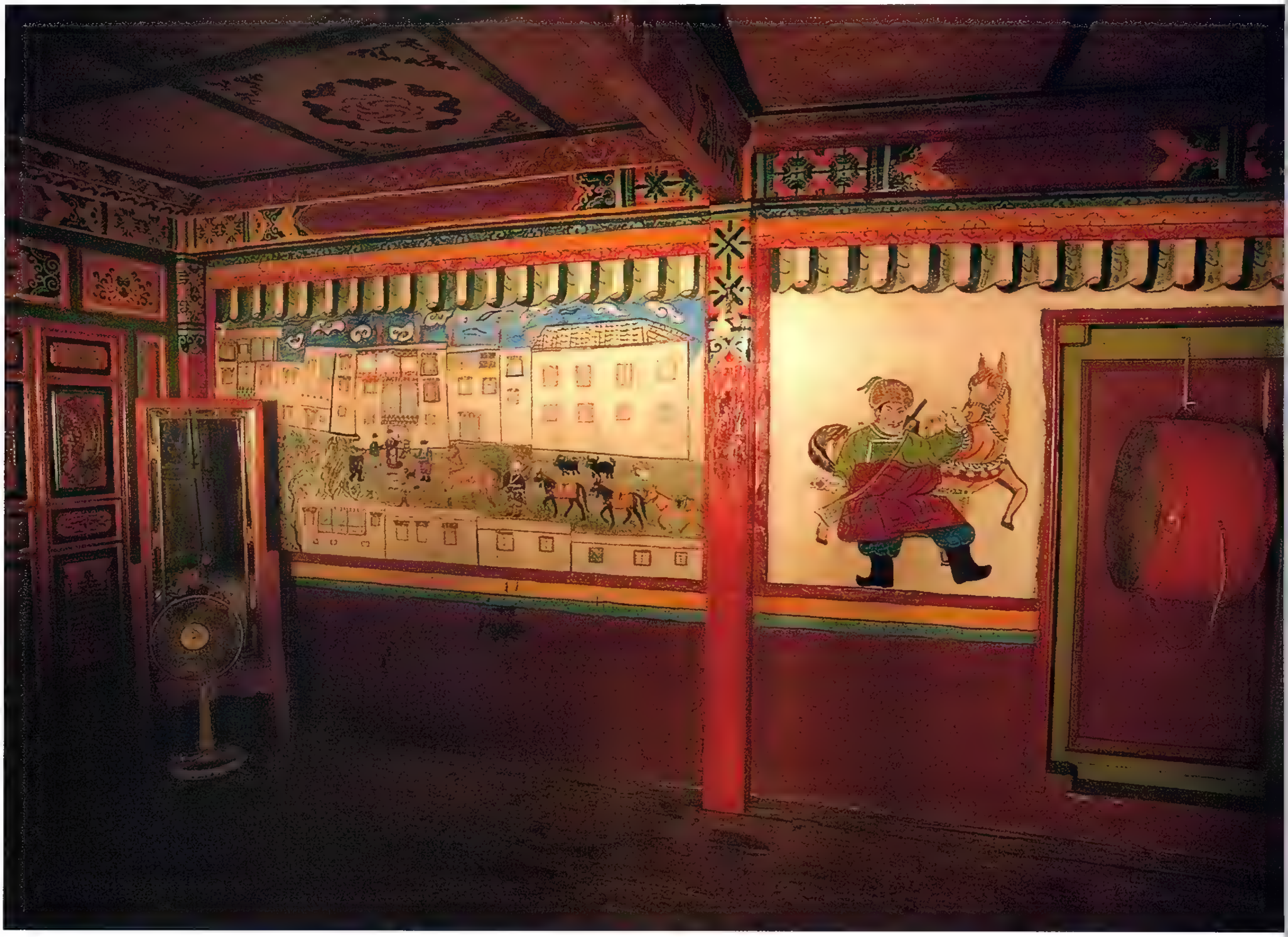

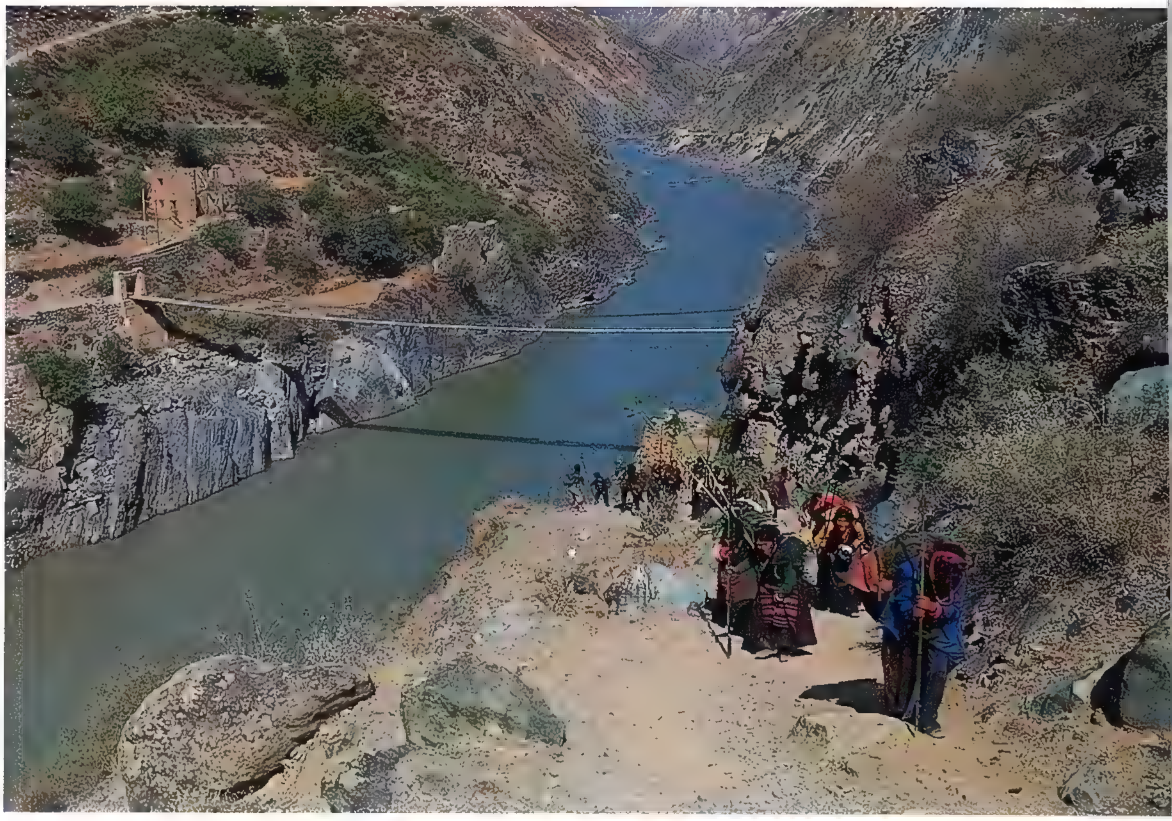

1. Murals in a residential house at Benzilan (by Alfred Ko)

2. The iron cable over Liutong River once used by horse caravans (by He Fangnan)

3. An old caravan head, Enaniqên in Benzilan (by Yang Kelin)

4. Making tea on a charcoal stove in a Tibetan home (by Peng Zhen Ge)

5. In Dêqên, a head horse (guiding horse at the head of the team) wearing special decoration (by Peng Zhen Ge)

The Lama Horse Caravan of Guihua Monastery

In the morning mist, we set off for Guihua Monastery.

Guihua Monastery, one of the 13 monasteries in Kangba, was built y the fifth Dalai Lama with the permission of Emperor Kangxi (r. 1662-722).

Here we learned about the trade run by the lamas in the past. After e building of Songtsan Monastery and the establishment of a market Zhongdian during the reign of Emperor Kangxi, the lamas, local offi-als and Tibetan merchants started to form a horse caravan for the ade at the triangular area of Yunnan, Tibet and India. Guihua Monas-ry had assets (including horses) worth a few billion yuan. Because of s strong economic reserves, rich businessmen from Lijiang, Heqing nd other places began to trade with the lama merchants. The ilaguhan Warehouse beside Guihua Monastery had over 30 branches, nown as the Headquarters of Great Merchants, and the place had be-me the distribution centre of Yunnan-Tibet trade.

Guihua Monastery conducted its business by sending lamas and aves to ship goods on horseback to Yunnan, India and Tibet, or by lowing lamas to independently carry out trade; so as to lighten the urden of the monastery and make up the shortage of food. The lama erchants mainly sold tea, silver coins, ham, brown sugar, copper and on wares to Tibet and India, and bought back cloth, cigarettes, wool-n blankets and woollen fabrics. The lama merchants could even con-ol the price and rig the market to flex their economic muscle.

When we started our visit along the ancient Tea Caravan Route from e tea producing areas, we had heard of stories about the Gusong orse Caravan.

This caravan in Zhongdian was one of the twenty well-known horse ams in Yunnan. It shipped half of the goods from Lijiang to Tibet.

Horse Caravan Stories of a Benzilan Tibetan Family

It was only dawn when we left Zhongdian. The morning breeze was bit chilly, heralding winter on its way.

By sunrise, we found ourselves close to the Jinsha River which we anted to see. It was still quite a distance from us, glittering like a read lying at the bottom of the valley. On either side of the river are êrong of Sichuan and the Yangla and Benzilan districts of Dêqên ounty.

From a distance Benzilan appeared green. The river became wider ere, and the water flow was gentle and mild. The buildings in the own were mainly of Han style, and people in the street all wore Han lothes. We had a nice meal in a roadside restaurant with steamed fish om the Jinsha River. Then we walked to the picturesque Ximuge Vil-ge to interview the former horse caravan head.

The first thing that caught our attention as we entered the Tibetan-tyle house of Anwujiangcuo was a mural on the wall. The men and the orses in the mural told the story of the horse caravans in the old days.

The 77-year-old caravan head, Snaliqin was sitting in front of his ome playing with his grandson. In the past, Snaliqin was a renowned erson in the village. He joined a horse caravan as a driver at 15, and ecame the head at 17. A few years later, he bought 14 horses and be-ame the boss for shipping tea into Tibet.

The old man told us that in the old days when he was going to ship oods to a far place, he and others joined together to form a large horse aravan of 300-400 horses with over 50 armed horse drivers. After they rrived at a camping place, the boss conducted business while others ook a rest, fed the horses, repaired horseshoes, and sometimes even let orses drink buttered tea. In the evening, they played music, danced, rank buttered tea and ate *zanba*, a barley cake. When night was deep, hey put horse pack saddles on the ground and slept under them. In inter, the roads were blockaded by snow in the Tibetan region, so the orse team went down to the tea-producing region in the south. They ought tea, brown sugar and bean noddles from Pu'er. It usually took hem 30 days to cover one way, and the horse caravan returned to Tibet

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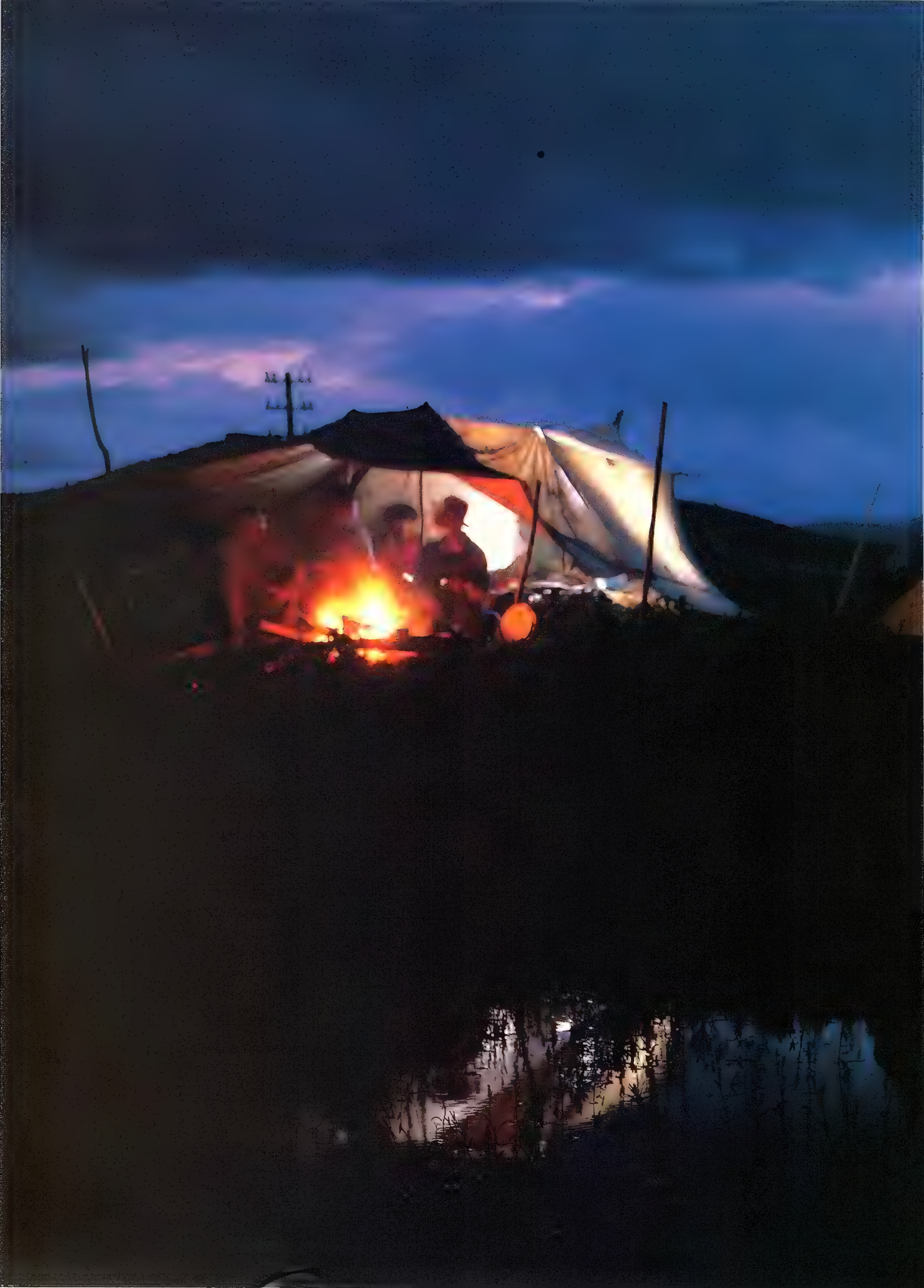
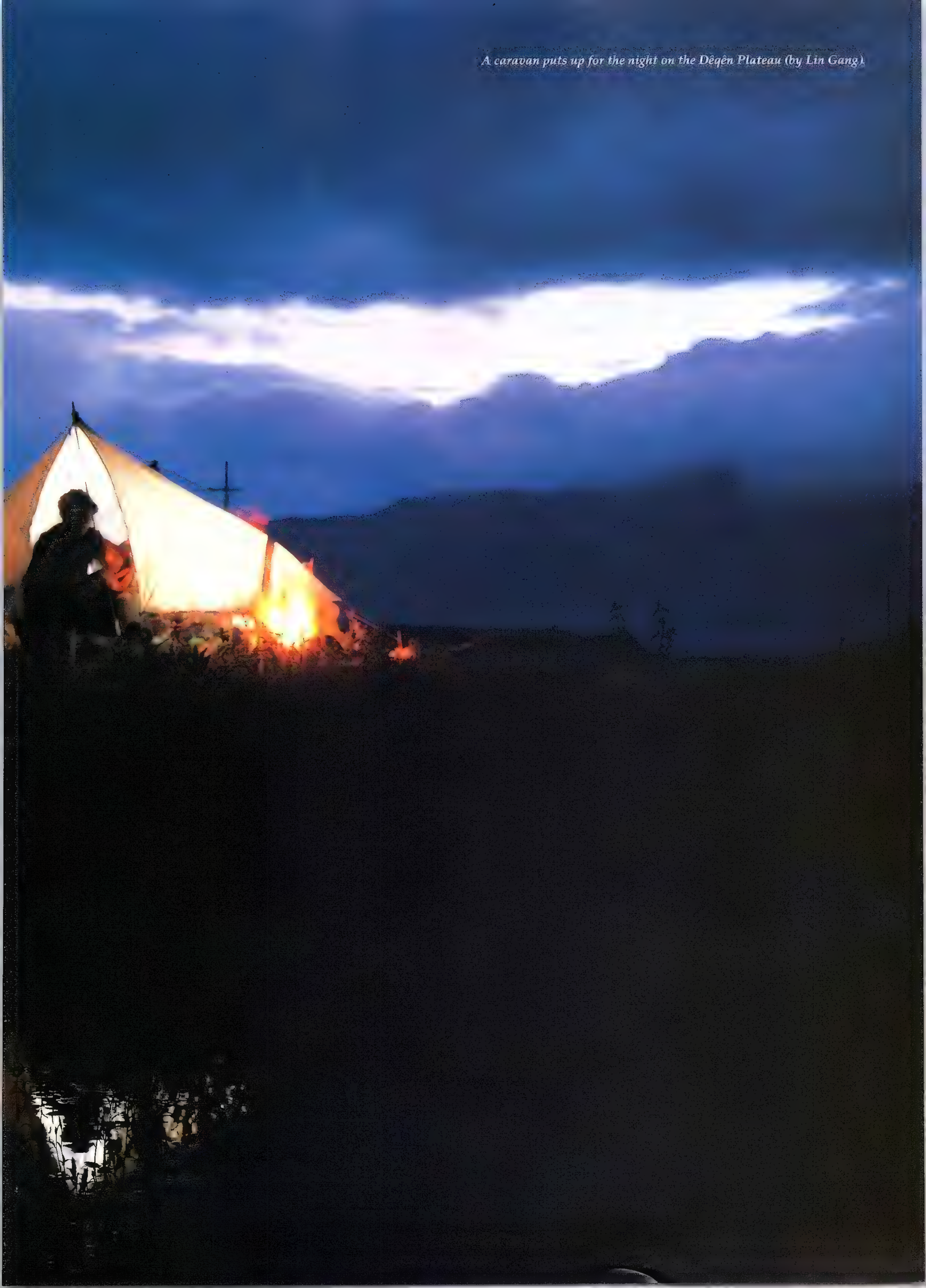
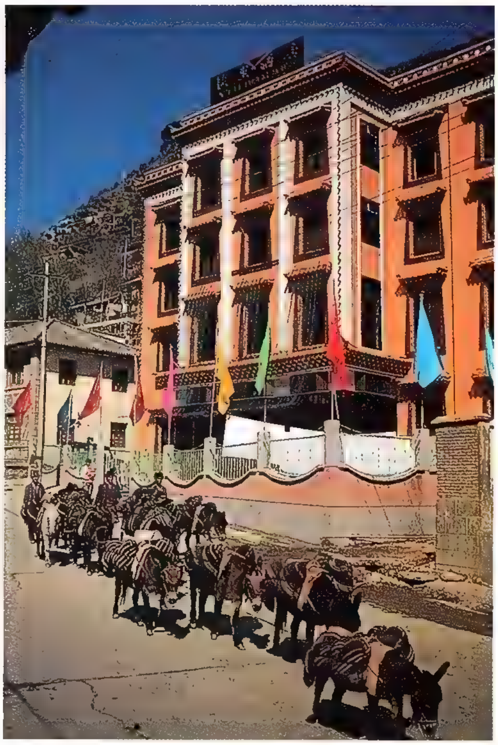




A caravan puts up for the night on the Dêqên Plateau (by Lin Gang)



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1. A horse caravan passing through Yanjing (by Xu Jinyan)
2. Inside the 100-year-old Catholic church at Yanjing (by Chen Jianbin)
3. Two French missionaries who died in a local revolt have lain under the ground for more than 100 years here (by Xu Jinyan)
4. Tibetan women after buying tea at the market hurrying home (by Alfred Ko)
5. Horse drivers from central Tibet (by Liu Jianming)

in summer. Because of its special location, Benzilan became very famous on the ancient trade route. Some Tibetans did not know Dêqên o Zhongdian but they knew the name of Benzilan.

A Perilous Ancient Route on the Plateau

Only after crossing mountain after mountain, did I begin to realiz the wilderness of the place. Our car seemed to enter into a pre-histor era, as we hit a lonely and quiet stretch without seeing people or another cars along the road. The red dust raised by our car wheels fille and hung in the air, leaving the whole valley in a red mist.

Dêqên Plateau is situated at the conjunction of Yunnan, Sichuan an Tibet with a complicated terrain. Hengduan Mountains interlock th mountains in eastern Tibet and western Sichuan. The Jinsha, Lanchan and Nujiang rivers fed with the water melted from the snow on mountains are blocked by the Gongga, Yunling and Nushan mountains her to form three parallel waterways. In the perilous terrain of high mountains, steep cliffs, deep valleys and dangerous gorges, how could ther have been an ancient route for men and horses to pass in the previou millennium?

When we were at Weixi, we were told by the locals that horse team passed the bridge here, then crossed Nushan Mountains before arriving at Bingzhongluo in Nujiang Valley. Horse caravan routes like thi were networked throughout the whole plateau in northwester Yunnan like the highland's arterial.

As we drove further, our car entered Baimang Snow Mountain Nature Reserve. Spruce, larch, white birch and trident maple added to th beauty of the landscape in the area, but what made us most excited wa the snow-laden mountain. The main peak of Baimang Snow Mountai rises 5,429.4 metres high, and the 12 peaks between Jinsha an Lanchang rivers look like 12 majestic-looking warriors as named by th Tibetans.

Shengping Town and Meili Snow Mountain

As our car exited from a big valley , we came to a long and narro town at the end of a mountain. This was Shengping Town of Dêqê County. The town located at 3,400 metres above sea level is the highes town at the northern tip of Yunnan.

Shengping, since the Tang and Song dynasties, has been the mai trading market and the centre for cultural exchange between the Han and Tibetans. Merchants from Lijiang, Dali, Tibet, Sichuan, Qingha and Gansu have had shops here. During the years of the Japanese aggression, Shengping had been a prosperous material shipping por known as a Petite Shanghai.

Because of the narrow terrain, the town was built along the two valleys with low wooden houses, newly-constructed storey buildings, an stream-like Tibetan horse caravans. All these offered a strange sigh unique to the border regions. The newly-opened fashion shops an karaoke song and dance halls have also added modern colours to thi small town.

Meili Snow Mountain belongs to Nushan Mountains, and its mai peak, Kawagebo, rises 6,740 metres above sea level. It is the highes mountain peak in Yunnan and boasts a virgin peak that no one has ye conquered.

We drove out of town, and after many sharp turns on the Yunnan Tibet Highway, Meili Snow Mountain suddenly appeared before ou eyes.

Yunnan-Tibet Highway and Iron Cables Over the Rive

Trucks from Tibet were rolling past, and horse riders were coming and going on the road. They were mostly Tibetans on a pilgrimage. We saw only one horse caravan by Adong, who were having their meal. They came from Yanjing of Tibet for short-distance transport.

We saw a few iron cables over the valley of Liutong River. According to history, the earliest iron cable was called Zuo Bridge because i

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as invented by the Zuo people. Horse caravans in the old days used hese cables to cross the river. Everyday about 200-1,000 horses crossed t major ferries. Now a few iron-chain bridges have been built over the ver, proving much more convenient for the horse caravans.

We interviewed an old man called Atu who lived in No. 2 Street in êqên. He told us that there are two routes entering Tibet from unnan. One is from Lijiang, passing Zhongdian and Dêqên to Bamda; nd the other is from Zhongdian, passing Xiangcheng and Yajiang, to nter Tibet along the Sichuan-Tibet Highway. The two routes meet in amda and then split into several routes. One goes southwest, passing awu and Zayü, to enter the northeastern part of India, connecting the nd routes in Yunnan, Burma and India with the Silk Road on the Sea; nother goes from Bamda, passing Qamdo and Ngaqu, to Lhasa where splits into two to exit from Tibet. One passes Gyangzê and Yadong to nter Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan. The other passes Xigazê, Lhazê and urang to enter India and Nepal.

Through our survey, we found that there were so many other alterative routes not found on maps. The ancient routes, like a net, covered he mountains and rivers in Yunnan, Sichuan and Tibet.

The Nagu Ferry lies on the eastern bank of the Lanchang River, oposite Tibet. The mountains on the other side of the river appear to be ore barren. Horse caravans in the old days crossed the Liutong River, eached Bitu, Zayü, or went upstream to Yanjing. We went along the ighway and arrived directly at Yanjing in Tibet. There is a Catholic hurch in Yanjing which was built by a French missionary over a cenury ago.

That night we slept at Chuka army service station. From then on, our ain lodging places were army service stations. Though the conditions ere awfully simple, for tired travellers in the snow they were exemely homelike.

Further to the east from Chuka is a small county town called arkam on the plateau between the Jinsha and Lancang rivers. Crossg Markam Snow Mountain and the Jinsha River Bridge, you may ener Sichuan via Chubalung and arrive at Batang.

Batang is the only pass through which tea is transported from itang to Tibet and is also used to ship tea from Yunnan to Sichuan. onsequently, horse caravans from Yunnan, Sichuan and Tibet arived and departed from Batang in endless streams, not only for shiping tea and salt but also the bringing together of cultures from differnt places.

In the east of Batang is Litang. Returning to Litang from here, you ill hence have completed a triangle of destinations travelling along he Tea Caravan Route through Sichuan, Yunnan and Tibet.

The Largest Trading Town in Eastern Tibet

We continued our trip from Chuka to Tibet. After crossing the 5,008-etre-high Dongba Snow Mountain, we passed Zogang and came to amda Grassland 4,200 metres above sea level. Its vast expanse sudenly opened our eyes after days of travel in the mountains.

From the sparsely populated Yunnan-Sichuan-Tibet triangle to amdo, a prosperous city on the plateau, we became strangely excited.

Qamdo, located at the central point of Sichuan-Tibet Highway, is ive days by truck from both Chengdu and Lhasa. In the early days it as an important distribution centre of goods on the Tea Caravan oute, and tea was shipped from here to Lhasa and then to India. amdo only became a city about 200 years ago, but its history can be aced back a few thousand years.

Standing on the top of Mount Damala, one can have a panoramic iew of Qamdo. Qamdo City, known as the Mouth of Watercourse, was uilt on the slope with Zaqu and Ngomqu rivers around. The Sichuan nd Yunnan bridges span over the rivers, indicating the historical relaions among Yunnan, Sichuan and Tibet.

In the busy streets of Qamdo, we found our way to Yunnan Street. here were 15 shops run by people from Heqing, processing and selling

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1. The annual horse race party at Rawu (by Lü Linglong)
2. A Tibetan Buddhist believer paying worship in the direction of Lhasa (by Xu Jinyan)
3. A "port" city in eastern Tibet – Qamdo in the back-ground (by Alfred Ko)
4. A Tibetan mother and her son in the agricultural area of Bamda (by Alfred Ko)

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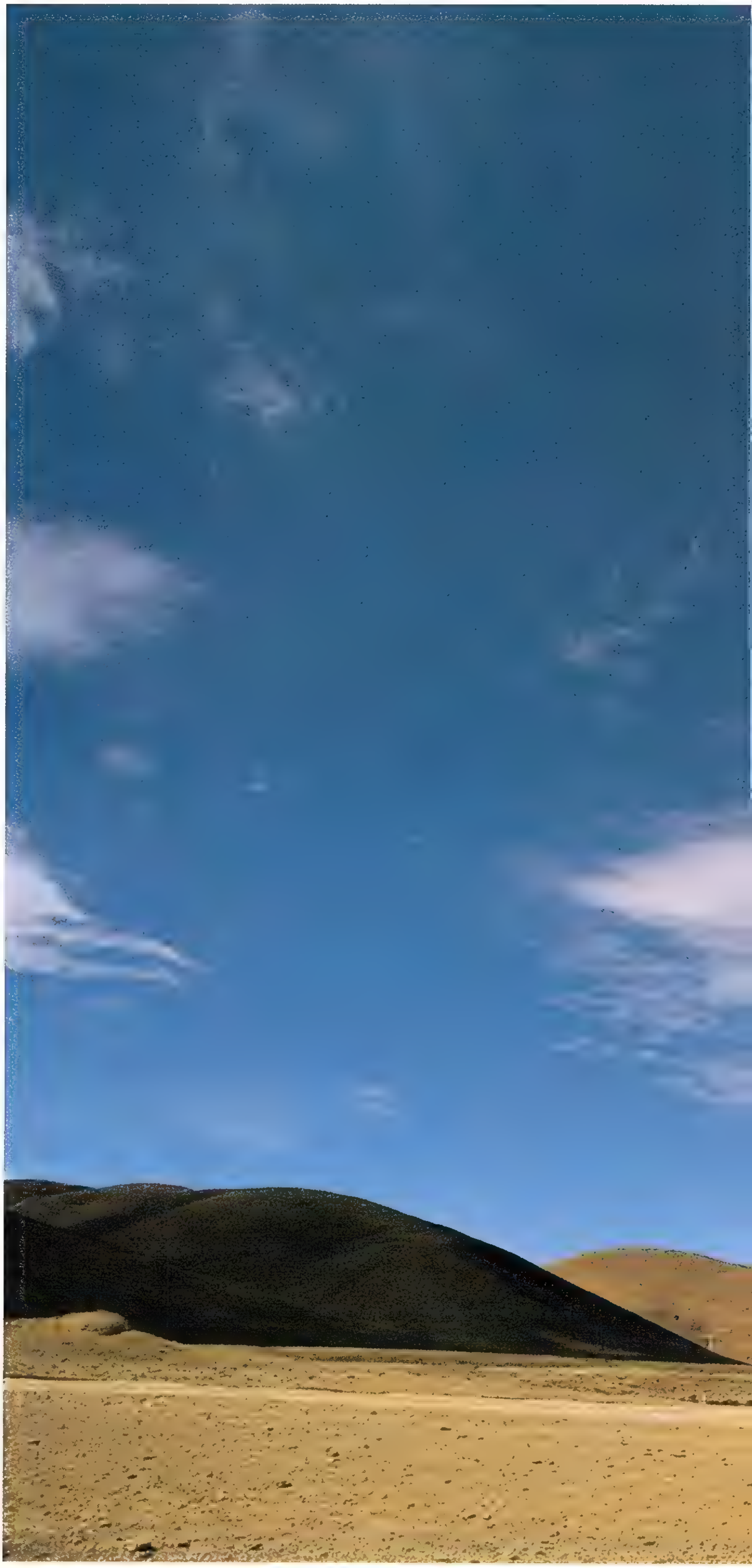
silverware, jewellery, incense-burners, knives and other daily necessities. Most of the merchants were from Sichuan, and even the Han language spoken there had distinct Sichuan accent. At the farm products market, we finally found horse gear. As horses were gradually replaced by trucks, shops selling horse gear on the Tea Caravan Route were diminishing. The new roads were built away from the ancient routes, and in Enda Village about a few dozen kilometres away from Qamdo the ancient route is still well preserved. There are many historical remains around Qamdo relating to the ancient route, such as the Temple of Lord Guan, Temple of the Earth God and stone tablets inscribed in Han language built by the Han merchants. The stone tablet in Bianbadangda Temple was erected by a Yunnan merchant named Peng after he entered Tibet. The second and third Pebalas of Qamdo had also been to Yunnan to build lamaseries and popularize their religion.

Because of the city's convenient traffic and communications, trading has become the main occupation for the local people. This has also influenced monasteries. Qangbalin Monastery not only runs orchards and fields, but has opened a few shops. Income from trade is not a small sum for the monastery.

This article should end by now, since we have followed the horse caravans to the sacred place Lhasa: the beautiful snow-bound area as eulogized in the songs of the horse caravans, and the mysterious and dangerous trips as transmitted in the legends told by merchants. More than one horse caravan head had told us about the markets in Yadong, Zham and Nyalam, and more than one merchant had described their experience in Calcutta, New Delhi and Bombay....

There are many ways for tea export, but this route across high mountains passing vast areas of snow is definitely the most difficult and dangerous. Even today, it is still a route only for those who are brave and adventurous.

Translated by M.Q.



Although caravan songs can be still heard today, only remnants of the ancient Tea Caravan Route have survived being largely replaced by the completion of highways which run from Yunnan and Sichuan to Tibet (by Yang Kelin).

Yunnan — Homeland of Tea

Pu'er Tea – Tuo Tea – Dianhong Tea

ARTICLE BY ZHANG TANGHENG

The tea plant is a species of camellia and Yunnan Province is the homeland of both tea and camellia. Many primitive tea trees have been found since ancient times, and there are ancient tea trees still in the remote hilly forests of southwestern China, especially in Yunnan. Here 1,500 metres above sea level in the mountainous area of Xishangbanna, there are several big tea trees. The biggest has a diameter of 1.21 metres, is 34 metres high and 1,700 years old. On the slope of Mount Nannuo, there is a tea tree about 800 years of age with a 1.58-metre trunk diameter.

Bamboo leave packed tea from Xiaguan Tea Factory, Yunnan (by Alfred Ko)

The Origin of the World's First Tea Plants

An ancient tea tree in Zhentai of Jinggu County has a height of 20 metres and a 2.76-metre girth, and in Fengqing County, there is an old tea tree of a girth 5.01 metres, 15 metres high. These trees of ancient origin are concrete evidence that Yunnan is the origin of the world's first tea plants.

Not only did tea trees originate from Yunnan of China, but China was also the first to utilize the leaves of the tea tree. The book on herbal medicine, *Shennong Metera Medica* named after the Chinese sage Shennong 5,000 years ago, states, "Shennong came across 72 toxicated herbs daily in tasting hundreds of herbs, but was antidoted by tea."

Wild large leafed tea trees grow in forests under warm and humid weather conditions. In northern Sichuan Province and across central and eastern China, their leaves become smaller for withstanding the cold winters. Those which had spread south to Indo-China and west to India under warmer weather conditions are similar to southern Yunnan with large leaves.

Nowadays, tea species is classified into two subspecies or varieties, the small leaf and the big leaf varieties. The latter is called Yunnan variety, formerly Pu'er variety.

Pu'er Tea

Pu'er County, however, is not a tea producing area, but the trading centre of sun-dried green tea, which is produced in the valley of Lancang River in Yunnan.

The method of processing Pu'er tea today has remained unchanged since the Tang Dynasty (618-907). Lu Yu (733-804) published his *Tea Classics* in 780 which stated that fresh tea leaves are steamed, bruised, pressed and dried. Nowadays, however, fresh tea leaves are roasted in a pan instead of steam-fixation and the flavour is developed significantly which represent the special characteristic of China's green tea.

Pu'er tea may be divided into two groups, loose and compressed. It may be served by pouring boiled water to the loose leafed tea, or by placing the broken compressed tea into boiling water and boiled.

According to the method of processing, Pu'er tea is primarily a sun-dried green tea, but during refining and compressing, it changes to a dark green which in China belongs to the black tea group. English black tea is known as red tea in China. Yunnan red tea in English is called Yunnan tea or Dianhong in Chinese.

Yunnan black congou tea was developed in the early 1930's both at Menghai and Fengqing counties of Yunnan Province. Quality broken black teas were also later developed, especially the FBOP grade. They are carefully derived from Yunnan big tea leaves which are in fat strips covered with golden pekoes. The very dense colour of its liquor is its unique characteristic.

Yunnan big leafed tea contains more water soluble substances than other kinds of tea, such as polyphenols and mainly catechins found abundantly in tender leaves. Tea catechins have a special function of the vitamin PP, which may improve the elasticity of the wall of micro-blood vessels, and helps decrease blood pressure.

Compressed square tea from Jingdong, Yunnan (by Ou Yansheng)

In processing sun-dried green tea, fresh leaves are primary pan-fixed, rolled and sun-dried. Sun-drying improves the quality and flavour of the tea. As in processing Oolong tea, withering is a necessary step for developing flavour.

Taking sun-dried green tea as the raw material, it is refined into loose and compressed Pu'er tea.

During compressing and storage, the polyphenols in Pu'er tea are thoroughly oxidized. Its liquor colour becomes orange-red, and its astringent taste changes to mellow and sweet. The longer the duration, the better the taste, and it can stand repeated brewing without losing much of its original strength. Oolong tea provides a strong digestive and salivatory function.

Tuo Tea

Pu'er Tuo tea is compressed into bucks, one of the several kinds of tea renowned since ancient times. Using tender Pu'er tea dried leaves as the raw material, soften it with steam treatment, then press into a mould to make a concaved buck. Tuo tea yields a very strong flavour and renders a sweet aftertaste in the mouth. Tuo tea helps digestion and drunk regularly may reduce high blood pressure.

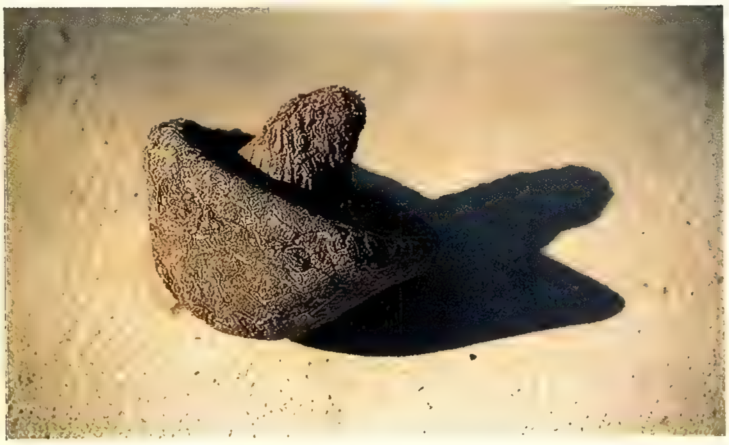
Other styles of compressed Pu'er tea are disk tea, square tea, cake tea and Jincha.

Jincha means tightly compressed tea where the sun-dried tea is thoroughly oxidized before compressing into small rectangular bricks. Formerly the bricks were heart-shaped like a mushroom. Jincha is mainly consumed in Tibet as buttered tea.

Buttered tea is a kind of tea often drunk by the Zhuang nationality and the Naxi nationality in Yunnan. First, boil the brick tea for a while and filter out the infused leaf (dregs). Pour the tea liquor into a tube and then add in butter, some fried walnut, peanuts as well as salt or sugar and egg. Then rigorously drive a pestle into the mixture, until the butter turns to an emulsified state melted evenly in the tea liquor. After pounding, pour out the buttered tea and drink it while it is hot. Buttered tea is a high-class Tibetan beverage and is also a pleasantly warming drink.

In ancient China, tea had been taken as a herb, then served as a soup, a vegetable and finally as a beverage. A number of special methods of making tea have been handed down from very ancient times and remains popular in some minority regions, especially in Yunnan.

A special ancient brew is Lei tea. It was said that in the Three Kingdoms period (220-280), General Zhang Fei went to Wuling County on a tour of inspection with his soldiers who suffered from migraine. People living there offered a beverage brewed from fresh tea leaves, rice, ginger and salt to migraine sufferers. Having drunk the liquor, the ailing soldiers recovered immediately from migraine. Drinking Lei tea is very common in the mountainous areas of Hunan, Guizhou, Guangdong and Guangxi. Today, cooked peanuts, sesame seeds and pepper are added in Lei tea.



Tuo tea recognized by its unusual shape (by Li Yaobo)

Fight Between Dragon and Tiger is a tea prepared by Lisu nationality who reside in the remote mountains of Yunnan Province, to cure colds. The tea leaves and water are first put together in a pot jar and cooked over a slow fire until condensed. With some wine in a cup, pour the prepared tea liquor into the wine, but not vice versa. Some people also like to add a red chilli to the drink. A cup of Fight Between Dragon and Tiger helps cold sufferers to sweat out the virus and achieve a sound sleep for speedy recovery.

PRECIOUS TRIBUTE OF MENGSHAN TEA
蒙山貢茶

"Tribute tea" in high-grade packaging (by Peng Zhen Ge)

Pickled tea is taken as a vegetable rather than a beverage. Fresh tea leaves are put into a pot jar and pressed with a heavy wooden board. Place another layer of leaves and press again until the jar is padded tightly with fresh tea leaves, then leave several months to ferment. Mix spices with the pickled tea and chew as a snack.

Bamboo tea is eaten as a vegetable by the nationalities of Dai, Hani and Jingpo in southern Yunnan Province. First, steam fresh tea leaves or sun-dried it, then rub the softened leaves against a bamboo screen by hand. Tightly stuff the rubbed leaves into a thick bamboo cylinder and seal the top end with bamboo leaves. Upturn the cylinder to drain excess juices and seal the top end with mud. This is to enable fermentation. After two to three months, the tea leaves turn brown in colour. Break the cylinder and dry the fermented tea leaves under shelter. After drying, put the leaves into a pot jar and pour sesame oil for pickling. This bamboo tea can now be served as a vegetable.

Burnt tea is probably the most ancient and primitive way of making tea as beverage. Such nationalities as the Dai and the Va residing in the tea producing areas in southern Yunnan have carried on the custom of plucking new tea shoots with a bud and five or six leaves and putting them directly over a flame to roast until they turn brown. The burnt tea is then ready to be used and boiled in a kettle of water for making tea.

Fried tea is often drunk by the people living in the border areas of Yunnan, Guizhou, Hunan and Guangxi. First, peanuts, soybeans, sesame seeds, popcorn and *nuoba* cakes made of glutinous rice flour and *jueba* cakes made of root of fern are fried in cooking oil over a vigorous fire until they turn brown. Take out the fried ingredients and put into cups and then fry the tea in cooking oil quickly. Pour water to the mixture and boil for a while. Take out the infused leaves, pour the tea liquor into cups filled with the fried ingredients and the fried tea is ready to serve.

Roast tea is drunk by minority nationalities residing in Pu'er and Menghai counties in Yunnan. First, put an empty pot jar over a fire to warm, then put a handful of sun-dried green tea leaves in the jar and roast for a while. The tea leaves will turn a brown colour and send out a pleasant smoky smell together with bursting sounds. Then pour boiling water into the jar to make the roasted tea liquor. Orange in colour with a long mellow and sweet aftertaste, roast tea is almost addictive when drunk from time to time.

Flights to and from Chengdu

Route	Days of Week	Dep.	Arr.	Flight No.
Beijing — Chengdu	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	08:55	11:05	CA1405
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	10:00	12:25	SZ4102
	2 5	13:10	15:40	SZ4108
	1 6 7	13:35	16:00	3U148
	1 4 6	13:50	16:20	SZ4106
	7	15:10	17:40	SZ4114
	1 3	15:25	17:40	3U602
	6	15:55	18:25	3U146
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	16:35	19:05	SZ4104
	1 5	17:05	19:25	SZ4606
	3	17:05	19:30	SZ4110
	2 4 5	17:20	19:40	3U142
	6	18:00	20:20	SZ4624
Chengdu — Beijing	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	07:10	09:00	SZ4101
	6	07:30	09:30	SZ4623
	2 4 5	07:45	09:50	3U141
	7	07:45	09:50	3U143
	6	07:45	09:50	3U145
	1 3	07:45	09:40	3U601
	1 5	09:00	11:05	SZ4605
	2 5	10:10	12:10	SZ4107
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	12:05	14:20	CA1406
	7	12:25	14:15	SZ4111
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	13:20	15:20	SZ4103
	1 3 4 6	15:45	17:40	SZ4105
Chongqing — Chengdu	7	08:20	09:00	G8 445
	1 3 5	08:50	09:50	SZ4421
	2 4 6	08:50	09:50	SZ4453
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	10:10	10:50	SZ4406
	2 6	13:45	14:45	3U422
	7	14:10	14:50	3U426
	3	17:50	18:30	G8 441
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	18:35	19:15	SZ4410
	3 5	19:45	20:25	3U384
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	19:50	20:30	SZ4410
Chengdu — Chongqing	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	08:45	09:20	SZ4405
	1 6 7	09:05	09:45	3U427
	7	09:50	10:40	G8 446
	2 6	12:05	13:05	3U421
	3 5	12:35	13:15	3U383
	2 4 6	14:35	15:30	SZ4454
	1 3 5	17:40	18:40	SZ4422
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	18:20	19:00	SZ4409
	3	19:30	20:10	G8 442
Guangzhou — Chengdu	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	09:15	11:00	CZ3403
	6	10:10	12:00	G8 431
	2 3 5 6 7	12:10	14:00	SZ4308
	1 4	12:10	14:50	SZ4308
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	15:15	17:15	SZ4302
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	15:45	17:45	3U332
Chengdu — Guangzhou	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	07:25	09:15	3U331
	1	07:35	09:20	SZ4309
	2 3 5 6	07:35	09:20	SZ4305
	1 4	08:30	11:10	SZ4307
	2 3 5 6 7	09:25	11:10	SZ4307
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	12:10	14:05	CZ3404
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	12:30	14:15	SZ4301
	6	13:10	15:00	G8 432
	4 7	14:50	16:30	SZ4303
	2 3 4 6 7	19:50	21:35	CZ3416

Route	Days of Week	Dep.	Arr.	Flight No.
Kunming — Chengdu	3	08:05	09:10	3Q4485
	1	12:50	14:10	WH2418
	1	13:00	14:00	3Q4479
	2 5	14:05	15:05	SZ4418
	4 7	15:15	16:15	CJ6422
	3	15:35	16:35	CJ6442
	2 6	15:55	16:55	XO9406
	4	17:05	18:05	3Q4471
	6	18:00	19:50	3U476
	4 7	18:20	19:20	SZ4414
	2 5	18:30	19:30	SZ4412
	7	18:30	20:20	3U480
	2 5 7	18:35	19:35	3Q4473
	1 6	19:15	20:20	SZ4412
	3 6	19:30	20:30	SZ4416
Chengdu — Kunming	2 3 5 6	07:00	08:00	SZ4415
	6	07:55	09:35	3U475
	4 7	08:40	09:40	SZ4413
	3	10:10	11:10	3Q4486
	1	10:25	11:50	WH2417
	4 7	13:10	14:15	CJ6421
	3	13:35	14:30	CJ6441
	2 6	13:55	14:55	XO9405
	1	15:00	16:00	3Q4480
	7	16:00	17:40	3U479
	2 5	16:30	17:30	SZ4411
	1 6	17:20	18:20	SZ4411
	4	19:05	20:05	3Q4472
	1	19:55	20:55	3Q4488
	2 5 7	20:35	21:35	3Q4474
Shenzhen — Chengdu	2 4 6	08:20	10:40	4G823
	1 6	11:30	13:30	CZ3453
	2 4 7	15:55	17:55	3U302
	1 2 3 4 7	16:20	18:20	SZ4314
	3 5	16:45	20:25	3U384
	5	17:30	19:20	SZ4314
Chengdu — Shenzhen	2 4 7	08:00	09:45	3U301
	2 4 6	11:40	13:55	4G824
	3 5	12:35	15:45	3U383
	1 2 3 4 7	13:30	15:20	SZ4313
	1 6	14:20	16:20	CZ3454
	5	14:30	16:25	SZ4313
Singapore — Chengdu	2 6	14:00	18:20	SZ434
Chengdu — Singapore	2 6	08:00	12:40	SZ433

Flights to and from Lhasa

Route	Days of Week	Dep.	Arr.	Flight No.
Lhasa — Beijing	7	10:00	14:15	SZ4111
Chengdu — Lhasa	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	07:00	08:50	SZ4401
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	07:10	09:00	SZ4403
Lhasa — Chengdu	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	09:50	11:20	SZ4402
	7	10:00	11:30	SZ4111
	1 3 4 5	10:00	11:40	SZ4404
	2 6	14:30	16:10	SZ4444
Chongqing — Lhasa	3 7	07:10	09:30	SZ4419
Lhasa — Chongqing	3 7	10:30	12:30	SZ4420
Kathmandu — Lhasa	2 6	10:15	13:30	SZ408
Lhasa — Kathmandu	2 6	10:30	09:15	SZ407

Average Climatic Conditions in Yunnan and Sichuan

			Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Yunnan	Kunming	Temperature (°C)	7.7	9.6	13.0	16.5	19.1	19.5	19.8	19.1	17.5	14.9	11.3	8.2
		Rainfall (mm)	11.6	11.2	15.2	21.1	93.0	183.7	212.3	202.2	119.5	85.0	38.6	13.0
Sichuan	Chengdu	Temperature (°C)	5.6	7.6	12.1	17.0	21.1	23.7	25.8	25.1	21.4	16.7	12.0	7.3
		Rainfall (mm)	5.0	11.4	21.0	51.1	88.3	119.4	228.9	265.8	113.5	47.9	16.5	6.4
	Chongqing	Temperature (°C)	8.0	9.9	14.0	18.7	22.6	25.0	28.6	28.9	24.7	19.2	14.2	10.5
		Rainfall (mm)	19.0	21.0	43.0	73.0	155.0	165.0	151.0	141.0	132.0	99.0	51.0	25.0

Train Schedules
Shanghai — Guiyang — Chongqing

151 F.T.	71/74 Exp.	Train No. / Station	72/73 Exp.	152 F.T.
11:25	17:40	Shanghai	12:20	07:00
15:10	20:52	Hangzhou East	09:12	03:26
19:10	00:35	Jinhua	05:14	23:31
02:44	07:04	Yingtan	22:52	15:44
12:20	15:29	Zhuzhuo	14:12	05:46
13:12	16:10	Xiangtan	13:20	04:54
22:54	00:42	Huaihua	04:54	19:40
01:07	02:55	Yuping	02:50	17:31
04:21	05:54	Kaili	23:53	14:31
06:42	—	Guiding	—	12:33
08:27	09:41	Guiyang	20:18	10:48
	13:06	Zunyi	16:46	
	17:56	Qijiang	12:14	
	19:48	Chongqing	10:11	

F.T. — Fast through passenger train

Train Schedules
Beijing — Guiyang — Kunming

87 Exp.	61 Exp.	Train No. / Station	62 Exp.	88 Exp.
19:58	12:05	Beijing	21:22	15:54
23:38	15:32	Shijiazhuang	18:02	12:21
05:33	21:10	Zhengzhou	12:21	06:24
09:36	01:19	Xinyang	08:05	02:20
13:25	05:05	Wuchang	04:08	22:17
19:01	10:14	Changsha	23:07	16:44
20:50	11:26	Xiangtan	21:46	14:47
04:48	19:50	Zhenyuan	13:04	06:23
07:32	22:01	Yuping	11:02	04:20
10:18	00:44	Kaili	08:02	01:32
13:58	04:24	Guiyang	04:32	21:48
	06:16	Anshun	02:39	
	09:13	Liupanshui	23:52	
	11:59	Xuanwei	21:11	
	16:54	Kunming	16:16	

Exp. — Express

Train Schedules
Kunming — Guangzhou

166/163 F.T.	Train No. / Station	164/165 F.T.
11:50	Kunming	19:36
14:50	Qujing	16:43
17:06	Xuanwei	14:33
22:51	Anshun	08:44
01:00	Guiyang	06:24
04:35	Duyun	02:31
16:16	Liuzhou	14:58
19:41	Guilin	11:22
03:46	Hengyang	03:56
09:16	Shaoguan	22:22
10:44	Yingde	20:46
13:20	Guangzhou	18:30

Train Schedules
Kunming — Shanghai

80 Exp.	Train No. / Station	79 Exp.
22:06	Kunming	06:54
00:54	Qujing	04:12
02:54	Xuanwei	02:02
08:20	Anshun	20:25
10:16	Guiyang	18:31
17:36	Mawei	11:19
00:40	Liuzhou	04:17
03:34	Guilin	01:11
10:02	Hengyang	18:57
12:10	Zhuzhou	16:51
22:38	Shangrao	05:51
02:30	Jinhua	01:34
06:01	Hangzhou	22:08
09:11	Shanghai	19:00

Major Hotels in Sichuan Province

Chengdu, Sichuan

Chengdu Grand Hotel
成都大酒店
29 Section 2, Renmin Road North, Chengdu, Sichuan 610081
Tel: 3333888 Telex: 600349 CHDGH CN
Fax: 336818
GM: Wang Zize
Opened 8 October 1990
456 rooms and 12 suites
Located 20 km from airport, 200 m from railway station
Facilities: Chinese and Western restaurants, conference rooms, business centre, karaoke, dance hall, beauty salon, gym, shopping arcade, massage, bar

Chengdu Hotel
成都飯店
East Section of Shudu Road, Chengdu, Sichuan 610066
Tel: 4444112, 4448888
Telex: 60164 CDHOT CN, 600077 CHMKT CN
Fax: 441603
Opened 18 May 1984
310 rooms
Located 15 km from airport, 5 km from railway station
Facilities: Chinese and Western restaurants, international conference hall, business centre, bar, swimming pool, tennis court, billiard room, gym, sauna, massage, clinic, karaoke, disco, coffee shop, function rooms

Jinhe Grand Hotel
成都金河大酒店

18 Jinhe Street, Chengdu, Sichuan 610031
Tel: 6642888 Telex: 600341 JHHTL CN
Fax: (028) 632037
GM: Long Guanyin
Opened 15 April 1991
400 rooms and 8 suites
Located 18 km from airport, 7 km from railway station
Facilities: Revolving restaurant, banquet hall, conference rooms, bar, karaoke, disco, dance hall, business centre, billiard room

Jinjiang Hotel
錦江賓館
80 Section 2, Renmin Road South, Chengdu, Sichuan 610014
Tel: 5582222 Telex: 60109 JJH CN
Fax: 5582348
GM: Luo Lixian
Opened May 1960
523 rooms and suites
Located 17 km from airport, 5 km from railway station
Facilities: Chinese and Western restaurants, conference halls, banquet hall, bar, shopping arcade, nightclub, KTV, billiard, sauna, massage, swimming pool, tennis court, gym, bowling

Minshan Hotel
岷山飯店

55 Section 2, Renmin Road South, Chengdu, Sichuan 610021
Tel: 5583333 Telex: 60247 MSH CN
Fax: 5582154
GM: LI LI
Opened 18 January 1988
422 rooms and suites
Located 7 km from airport, 2 km from railway station
Facilities: Chinese, Western and Japanese restaurants, banquet hall, conference hall, business centre, shopping arcade, nightclub, karaoke, swimming pool, beauty salon, sauna

Tibet Hotel Chengdu
成都西藏飯店

10 Renmin Road North, Chengdu, Sichuan 610081
Tel: (028) 3333988 Telex: 60309 THC CN
Fax: (028) 3333526
GM: He Shengqiu
Opened 18 February 1988
359 rooms and suites
Located 22 km from airport, 1 km from railway station
Facilities: Chinese and Western restaurants, business centre, shopping arcade, karaoke, beauty salon, massage, recreation centre

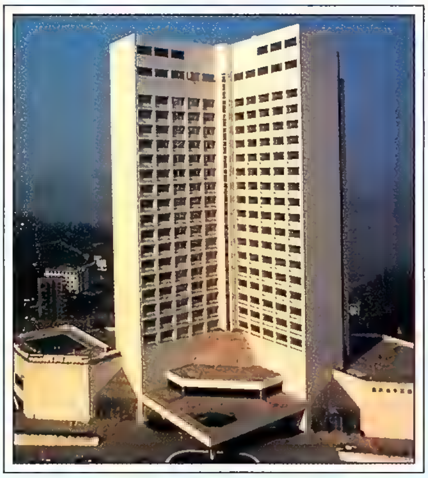
Zhufeng Hotel Chengdu
成都珠峰賓館
107 Shangxi Shuncheng Street, Chengdu, Sichuan 610015
Tel: 6662441 Telex: 600023 ZHGHO CN
Fax: 671717
Opened 15 March 1988
270 rooms
Located in the city centre, 20 km from airport, 4 km from railway station
Facilities: Chinese restaurants, banquet hall, business centre, bar, karaoke, disco, billiard room, shopping arcade, beauty salon

Chongqing, Sichuan

Chung King Hotel
重慶市重慶飯店
41 Xinhua Road, Chongqing, Sichuan 630011
Tel: (0811) 349301 Fax: (0811) 343085
GM: Ronnie Chui Jing Wah
200 rooms and suites
Located in the city centre, 33 km from airport, 5 km from railway station
Facilities: Chinese and Western restaurants, bar, conference hall, dance hall, disco, karaoke, shopping arcade, business centre, clinic, beauty salon, sauna, billiard, gym, massage

Chongqing Guesthouse
重慶賓館
235 Minsheng Road, Chongqing, Sichuan 630010
Tel: (0811) 345888 Telex: 62122 CQGH CN
Fax: (0811) 330643
GM: Yang Huai
Opened 18 July 1985
265 rooms
Located in downtown Chongqing, 30 km from airport, 5 km from railway station
Facilities: Chinese and Korean restaurants, business centre, conference rooms, health club, swimming pool, sauna, massage, nightclub, karaoke, dance room, bar, billiard room, mini-golf, beauty salon, shopping arcade

Holiday Inn Yangtze Chongqing
重慶揚子江假日飯店



15 Nanping Beilu, Chongqing, Sichuan 630060
Tel: 203380 Telex: 62220 HIYCQ CN
Fax: 200884
GM: Peter Pollmeier
Opened 24 February 1989
379 rooms and suites
Located 5 km from city centre, 30 km from airport, 4 km from railway station
Facilities: Chinese restaurant, business centre, disco, karaoke, bar, ballroom (300 persons), outdoor swimming pool, health club, sauna, massage, billiard room, shopping arcade, beauty salon, gym

Renmin Hotel
重慶人民賓館
173 Renmin Road, Chongqing, Sichuan 630015
Tel: (0811) 351421 Fax: (0811) 352076
GM: Luo Guangqing
213 rooms and suites
Located 28 km from airport, 3 km from railway station
Facilities: Chinese and Western restaurants, bar, conference hall, dance hall, disco, karaoke, shopping arcade, karaoke, business centre, clinic, beauty salon, sauna, billiard, massage, baby sitting service, steam bath, solarium, facilities for handicapped persons

Shaping Grand Hotel
重慶沙坪大酒店
84 Xiaolongkan New Street, Shapingba District, Chongqing, Sichuan 630030
Tel: (0811) 963195 Fax: (0811) 963293
GM: Deng Fajing
216 rooms and suites
Located 30 km from airport, 1 km from railway station
Facilities: Chinese and Western restaurants, bar, karaoke, conference hall, exhibition hall, dance hall, disco, florist, shopping arcade, business centre, clinic, beauty salon, sauna, billiard, gym, massage, swimming pool, baby sitting service, facilities for handicapped persons

BUSINESS TIPS

EVENTS

Urümqi Trade Fair

Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region is scheduled to stage its annual international trade fair in September 1-8 in Urümqi its capital. Xinjiang, which borders eight countries along its 5,600-kilometre frontier, is poised to use the fair as an opportunity to embrace more outside investment. This is the fourth foreign trade fair organized by Xinjiang, and coincides with the scheduled celebrations of the 40th anniversary of the founding of the autonomous region. Xinjiang is traditionally China's most significant producer of grain, cotton, sugar beet and fruit. It is also becoming a petroleum base with its rich oil and gas resources in the Tarim Basin.

Bicycle Fair

China's industrial centre of Shanghai will hold a large international fair in September. The sixth of its kind since 1990, the China Cycle '95 will display a number of high quality bicycles and components, the world's latest manufacturing techniques and testing instruments, newly-developed materials, body-building equipment, mini motorcycles and cyclist's clothing. China's current annual production capacity is 41 million bicycles.

Auto Parts Fair

Sponsored by the Ministry of Machine-Building, an international automobile parts and components fair will be held October 14-19. The fair is expected to attract dozens of world-renowned auto manufacturers and some domestic auto parts enterprises. Participants will exchange ideas on the development of the world auto parts industry, as well as product varieties.

Garments Fair

The '95 International Famous Brand Garments and Personal Adornments Fair will be held in Qingdao, Shangdong Province on October 18. More than 400 famous garments and adornments companies from around the world will present their products at the fair. China International Enterprises Co-operation Corp and China Yellow River United Develop Group are jointly housing the fair which is aimed at promoting international exchanges and co-operation with Chinese garments companies.

Textile Fair

The latest designs are expected to be woven into Chinese garments and advanced expertise adopted to upgrade China's textile processing industry through a major annual international trade fair, starting this year. Organized by the China National Textile Council, it will be held alternately in Beijing and Shanghai. The first China International Trade Fair for Apparel Fabrics, Home Textiles and Accessories is scheduled from October 30 to November 1 in Beijing. To date, more than 100 major companies from China, Italy, France, Germany, Britain, Japan, South Korea and the U.S. have applied for participation. Last year, China, the world's largest textile exporter exported US$35.55 billion worth of fabrics and garments, amounting to nearly one third of China's total exports. However, experts point out that Chinese textiles and garments lag behind world standards by a wide margin, especially in design, processing, printing and dyeing. Attention will be especially keen for finished textile products and textile manufacturing equipment.

78th Guangzhou Fair

The 78th Guangzhou Fair, also known as the Chinese Export Commodities Fair, is scheduled to take place from October 15-30 this year in Guangdong Province. The Guangzhou Fair, staged in the city every April and October, used to be the largest trade event in the country with Chinese trade companies, provinces and cities displaying their best products for contract deals with foreign companies. The event usually generates 20 per cent of the total exports achieved during the year. The 77th Guangzhou Fair earlier this year netted export contracts worth about US$10 billion, where textiles, art and crafts and light industrial products were the best sellers to its top trading partners Hong Kong, Macau and the European Union.

BANKING & FINANCE

Tianjin's New Hi-Tech Ruling

A new regulation on the management of Tianjin's New Technology Development Zone (NTDZ) has been recently published and implemented. The regulation covers development gaols, business, hi-tech enterprise standards, management structure, assessment and approval, and preferential policies for enterprises. Hi-tech enterprises will be taxed at just 10 per cent and newly established enterprises will be exempt from income taxation for two years. Infrastructure construction including water, gas, electricity, heating, sewage systems and highways are to be preferred as investment projects by domestic and foreign entities, states the regulation. Tianjin, the largest coastal city in North China, has completed legislation concerning its three zones — the Economic and Technology Development Zone, Bonded Zone, and the NTDZ which is one of China's state-level hi-tech development zones. Covering 21.85 square kilometres, Tianjin's NTDZ presently has 1,573 companies including 188 overseas-funded. Its total turnover last year reached US$493 million, ranking third in China's TDZs.

Harbin Land-Use Rights Auction

Heilongjiang Province will auction the land-use rights of 1.87 million hectares of wasteland and undeveloped land to Chinese and foreign investors later this year. Joint ventures or solely owned companies are welcomed to undertake land development projects, where they can use such land for 30-70 years, and transfer and inherit it during the operation period as stipulated in their contracts. Heilongjiang, a major wheat, soybean, sugar beet and flax producer has 8.76 million hectares of farmland, more than any other province in China, but also has 3.87 million hectares of wasteland and undeveloped land. Currently, a number of companies from Japan, the U.S. and Thailand have expressed an interest. A Korean company has already signed an agreement with Heilongjiang Provincial Bureau of State Farms to spend US$60.24 million on joint ventures in farm products, on 333,000 hectares of wasteland.

MARKETING

Andersen Expands

U.S-based Andersen Consultancy, one of the world's largest management and information technology consultancies, expects to strengthen its presence in China by opening an office in Beijing. The company will focus its mainland business on energy, power, telecommunications and banking industries, and some governmental departments. It is expected to provide clients with planning, design and installation of business-information systems.

TOURIST INFORMATION

Holiday Inn Guangzhou Special

Holiday Inn City Centre in Guangzhou is currently offering three special vacation packages which are as follows: Summer Cooler — up to October 13,1995, this package priced at US$72 + 20%, includes guaranteed single room rate, late check out until 4:00pm, shuttle to/from Guangzhou Railway Station, use of the health club, etc. For those staying on the Easy Weekend Package (except Canton Trade Fair period, October 14-30,1995), it costs US$60 + 20% for the room and above items on weekends up to the end of this year. Finally, also available until the year end are the Executive Package at US$128 + 20% for the Executive Club room, or US$188 + 20% for the Executive Club Suite. Included in the price is a limousine pick up from Guangzhou Bai Yun International Airport or Guangzhou Railway Station, etc.

Car Rental Holidays

Tourists in Hainan now can rent a car to tour the scenic tropical island province. Those who hold a valid Chinese or foreign driving licence, or a trust of deed can come and rent a car. Shenhai Car Driving and Rental Co. Ltd, in conjunction with the Hainan Branch of China International Travel Service has already bought 130 Chinese and foreign-made cars for its rental service. As China's only tourist resort in a tropical area, Hainan attracted over 3 million tourists in 1994.

555 Hong Kong-Beijing Rally '95

To enable a repeat of last year's Hong Kong Super Special Stage at the military garrison on Stone Cutters Island, the first ever international rally in the territory, the Hong Kong Automobile Association (HKAA) and the Federation of Automobile Sports of the People's Republic of China (FASC), have confirmed this year's event date as October 14-20, 1995. The total distance of the entire route is 3,700 kilometres with 26 special stages comprising of 530 kilometres. Unique on the roster of international rallies, the 555 Hong Kong-Beijing Rally is a straight line event, starting from Hong Kong's historic Stone Cutters Island on Saturday, October 14 and finishing in the shadow of China's Great Wall on Friday, October 20.

Float Competition

Shanghai will hold its first international float competition, as part of the '95 Shanghai Huangpu Tourism Festival scheduled to open in September. Businesses from Thailand and Singapore as well as domestic firms have expressed their wish to participate. The competition will show the customs and cultures of different localities.

Yellow River Park

The Yellow River Tourist Zone, covering an area of 80 hectares, is scheduled to open to visitors on September 1, '95. The zone will highlight the beautiful scenery of the Yellow River, local culture such as the riverside replicas of historical architecture, including a gate of the Shaolin Temple, Songyue Temple Pagoda and the Dragon Pavilion; local customs and a comprehensive functional area. A 2.7-kilometre main road inside the zone has been opened to traffic.

Da Yu Tomb

The tomb of Da Yu, founder of the Xia Dynasty (2100-1600 B.C.), the first dynasty recorded in Chinese history, is to be reopened to domestic and overseas visitors after three months of restoration work. Da Yu is known as a master of flood control with his successful flood control campaign in China 4,000 years ago. Da Yu's reputed devotion to his campaign meant that he put off visiting his home for 18 years, demonstrating his recognition of the urgency of the situation. Located in Shaoxing City, Zhejiang Province, the tomb has been placed on the list of protected sites by the Zhejiang Provincial Government, and attracted 1 million visitors last year.

AIRLINE UPDATES

Lijiang Airport in Yunnan Province officially opened to traffic last month. Located in the northwest, the airport can accommodate aircraft as large as the Boeing-737. The new airport is 375 kilometres from Kunming, the provincial capital, with a flight time of 40 minutes.

In Shanghai, Hongqiao Airport started extension work, which is expected to be completed and operating by the end of 1996. The project includes extending the current domestic passenger terminal building from 21,300 to 46,600 square metres; installation of advanced telecommunications facilities and other equipment; extension of the existing tarmac; and building a multi-level parking lot and warehouse.

Qinghai Province and Southwest China is to be linked for the first time by a new air route. The route links Chengdu, Sichuan's capital, Xining, Qinghai's capital, and Urumqi, capital of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. Southwest China Airlines is making the flight every Monday using Soviet-made Tu-154 planes. Air routes to Beijing, Guangzhou and Urumqi were opened earlier.

On July 20, Hunan Province launched its first international flight. The Boeing 737-500 flight departs every Thusday from Changsha the provincial capital, to Bangkok. To date, Hunan also has one air passage for flights to Hong Kong, and a single port of entry.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES

Western Zhou Tombs

Some 500 pieces of pottery, bronzeware and jadeware have been unearthed from a group of tombs dating back to the late Western Zhou Dynasty (1100-771 B.C.) in Shangdong Province. The bronzeware includes 78 sacrificial vessels, 30 musical instruments, 50 weapons and seven chariots. Seven of the bronzeware pieces bear inscriptions. Most of the relics come from the No.6 tomb, which is 4.6 by 4.5 metres. In the burial chamber archaeologists found four layers of coffins and two chests containing burial articles. The tombs were located at Mount Wufeng in Changqing County where archaeologists also unearthed seven building foundations and over 100 pits dating from the Xia Dynasty to the Han Dynasty.

Spring and Autumn

Chinese archaeologists have unearthed temples of the Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 B.C.) at two sites in Shanxi Province. Part of an ancient kingdom which includes ruins of a city, temples and tombs, the sites cover an area of 33 square kilometres. Pottery, bronzes and bricks have been found in an 400 by 500 metre area of the buildings. At the Houma City excavation site, the ancient buildings here are thought to date back 2,500 years, having been built in the middle of sixth century B.C. and abandoned early fifth century B.C.

NEXT ISSUE

Tibet by Jeep

Playwright in the Commercial World

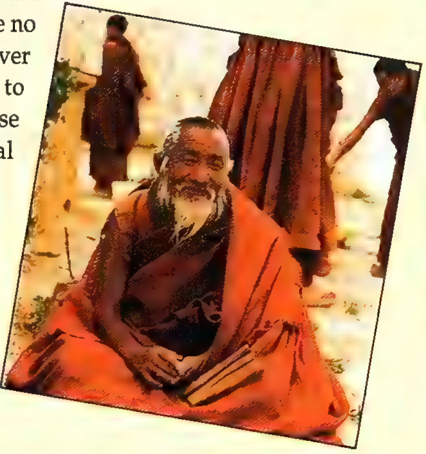
Tracing the Ruins of the Three Kingdoms (4)

Keeping fit for the summer or man against Nature? Embark on a modern day odyssey by jeep. We send four intrepid reporters on a 10,000-kilometre drive to one of the most sparsely populated and fascinating regions of the world, Tibet. Entering by the Yunnan-Tibet route, our roadster reporters take a challenging sandwich between the limits of the Northern and Outer Plateau and the Outer and Southeastern Plateau to the land of buttered tea, devoutly spiritual Buddhists, yaks, sacred lakes and mountains. Passing Nepalese and Indian border towns, immense grasslands and glaciers, Tibet by jeep is any National Geographic reader's dream. For those with less time and oxygen to spare, however, we can follow the trials and tribulations of the prime minister, Zhuge Liang, ruler of the former Kingdom of Shu in the provinces next door of Sichuan, Yunnan and further in Gansu and Shaanxi, to retrace the Qishan Mountain trails and many historic charms left behind from the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*.

Contributions Welcome!

Do you have an interesting story to tell about your experiences in China? Do you have practical travel tips you would like to pass on to other travellers? Have you taken high-quality photographs which you feel other readers would appreciate?

If so, we would be pleased to receive your contributions for possible publication in a future edition of *China Tourism*. Articles should be no more than 2,000 words and should, whenever possible, have colour prints or slides to accompany the text. For further details please contact the Foreign Languages Editorial Department.



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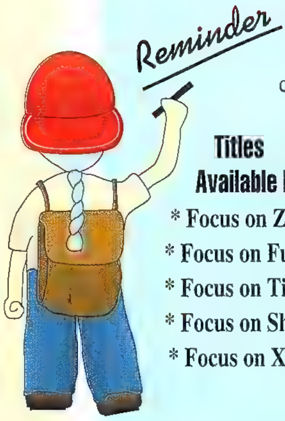

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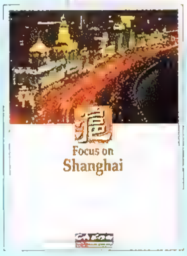

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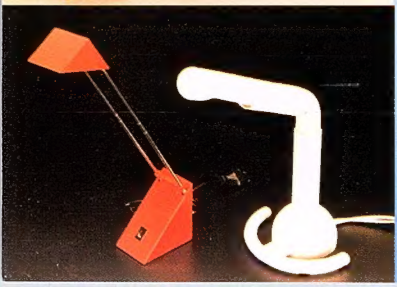

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